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No.11

February/March 1988

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# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

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No. 11

ISSN 0268-8328

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1988

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Our cover illustration shows the uniform of an ARVN Airborne captain, mid-1960s - see p.39

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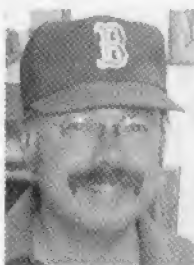
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## EDITORIAL

Most contributors to this crowded issue are old friends; but we welcome two newcomers to our pages. **John Canning**, whose interest in the work of Caton Woodville grew from his hobby of painting military miniatures, is a well-known face at American miniature shows, where he sponsors a 'Thin Red Line' award for British subjects, 1816-1900. John works for the US Postal Service, and lives on the Monterey Peninsula in California.

The human interest has always seemed to us the most appealing aspect of medal collecting; and we are delighted that our first specifically 'medal article', by **James Hammond**, introduces beginners to the type of research which brings such awards alive. James works in the Coin and Medal Department at Christie's, helping to accumulate three specialist sales a year. His



John Canning



James Hammond

interests cover all periods of naval and military campaign history, but particularly Nelson's navy, the Old Contemptibles, and Marshal Ney's withdrawal from Russia.

### Crimean War Research Society

We are asked to bring to your attention this international society, which pursues many lines of research in such areas as uniforms, medals, orders of battle, unit histories, and diaries. The society has a number of Special Publications, a list of over 60 Information Sheets, and a quarterly illustrated journal, *The War Correspondent*. The annual subscription is only £5 in the UK, \$14 in the USA, and £10 equivalent elsewhere overseas. Enquiries to the Secretary, David Cliff, at 33 East Street, Triangle, Sowerby Bridge, W. Yorkshire HX6 3PA.

### Thurrock Armada '88

A large-scale series of 'Tudor events', many with a military aspect, are planned by Thurrock Borough Council for the weekend 6/7

August, the 400th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's review of the troops at Tilbury. Stout-hearted men, aged 16 and up, are required to form the army; uniforms, equipment and weapons will apparently be supplied by the council and the sponsors. This promises to be the largest single event connected with the Armada celebrations, and plans envisage a crowd of up to 80,000 people. 'Living history' enthusiasts who wish to carry a pike for Her Majesty should contact Steven Payne at 98 Suffolk Road, Barking, Essex, tel. 01-594 9958.

### Errata

In 'MI' No.10, p.3, we wrongly captioned the photograph of the drum major of the American Revolutionary Brigade: though he paraded with the '10th Foot', this dazzling popinjay in fact serves with the '29th Foot', as hawk-eyed readers have deduced from his buttons. On p.43, insert 'is' after 'displayed' on last line of text; and on p.32, col.2, line 5, insert 'also' after 'but'. **MI**

### Video releases:

'Wheels of Terror' (Medusa: 15)

'Hellcats of the Navy'

(RCA/Columbia: U)

'The Caine Mutiny'

(RCA/Columbia: U)

### Royal Navy Videos

(Film Archive Management & Entertainment)

Many readers will be familiar with Sven Hassel's 'semi-autobiographical' series of novels about German soldiers in a penal tank regiment. Since *The Legion of the Damned* was first published in 1953 over 50 million copies of these novels have been sold, and each new title is guaranteed success. Describing in unsparring detail the activities of soldiers who are thieves, killers, rapists, deserters, religious fanatics and political agitators, the novels can be described as either grimly realistic, or as an unwholesome wallowing in the horrors of war. Almost 30 years after its appearance in print *Wheels of Terror*, the second in the series, is the first to be produced as a film, and has been released directly onto video.

The episodic form of the novel is almost unfilmable, so script-writer Nelson Gidding has created a new plot out of incidents from both *The Legion of the Damned* and *Wheels of Terror*. It concerns the adventures in Russia of a platoon of the '27th (Penal) Panzer Regiment' after the fall of Stalingrad. After a spell at the front the sadistic Col. von Weiss-hagen sends them on a 'Dirty Dozen'-style mission to sabotage a fuel train miles behind enemy lines. The parts of the Old Man, Porta, Tiny, the Legionnaire and Sven are played by a largely unfamiliar cast, bolstered by the presence of David Carradine as Von Weiss-hagen, and the fleeting appearance of Oliver Reed as 'the General'. The excesses of the novel have inevitably been toned down for a mass audience, although the script does retain some of the cynicism of the original. It

lacks the budget to portray carnage on the scale described in the book; but does include a tense battle sequence which pits T-34 tanks against Russian SU-100 SPGs, which here stand in for their German counterparts.

Nathan Juran's *Hellcats of the Navy* (1957) is based on Adm. Charles A. Lockwood and Hans Christian Adamson's book about the special mission branch of the US Navy submarine service. In a brief prologue Adm. Nimitz explains that 'Hellcat' submarines were tasked in 1944 with retrieving an example of a new kind of Japanese mine which was impeding US submarine deployment in the Japan Sea. The story

concerns Cdr. Casey Abbott (Ronald Reagan), whose USS *Starfish* undertakes several missions including the capture of one of the new mines, the destruction of an island radio base, and the discovery of a safe channel through enemy minefields. Back in port at Guam, he renews his relationship with nurse Helen Blair (Nancy Davis).

The dramatic thrust of the film is less concerned with the actual missions than with the responsibilities of command. At the beginning Abbott loses a man through a hasty crash dive, an act made all the more questionable by the fact that the dead man was his rival for Helen's attentions. This earns him the

disrespect of his crew, and particularly that of his second-in-command Landon (Arthur Franz), who resents the fact that Abbott's reports have prevented him from obtaining his own captaincy.

The film is typically routine low-budget submarine adventure, with little of the realism and tension which characterised, for example, Wolfgang Petersen's *Das Boot*. Its main points of interest are that it was Reagan's penultimate film, and the only one in which he co-starred with his second wife.

In contrast, Edward Dmytryk's *The Caine Mutiny* (1954) is an American naval drama of a far superior kind. It is based on Herman Wouk's novel about a destroyer-minesweeper serving in the Pacific in 1944. The newly-joined Ensign Keith (Robert Francis) is appalled by

## ON THE SCREEN



# AUCTION

For some two hundred years Britain ruled an empire, and in various continents men from this country individually explored, exploited and ruled areas larger than an English county. When they retired or returned home on leave they brought with them souvenirs; and frequently these were weapons. Few country houses lacked a display of Indian, Chinese or African weapons; and as these pieces were eventually disposed of, through death or house clearance, they found their way on to the market. With few exceptions they failed to attract particular interest among collectors; and for many years good quality decorative weapons and armour from Asia were cheap and plentiful. Japanese swords were, of course, an exception, since they have always rightly been regarded as supreme examples of the swordsmith's arts, and as such have always commanded higher

prices than most Asian pieces.

As the supply of low and moderately priced European arms and armour has decreased, and the appreciation of Asian art has increased, the demand for Oriental arms and armour has steadily risen. With increasing demand came increasing auction prices, and these seem set to continue to rise. At the moment the top quality market is handled by a small number of dealers; but the general dealers in arms and armour are beginning to buy and sell more and more of this kind of material.

The commonest items are probably the Indian swords, *talwars*, which are usually plain but may have some applied gold or silver decoration on the hilts. These range in price from £50, to hundreds for the more decorative pieces: in Sotheby's last sale of Islamic Works of Art on 14 October 1987 a group of five went for £440. Daggers are reasonably plentiful, and are notable for their varied shapes; in the same sale an all-steel Indian dagger with some decoration realised £110. Arab daggers, *jambiyahs*, have over the past year or two appreciated, and their plentiful silver decoration ensures prices of several hundred pounds each — in the Sotheby's sale the range was between £200 and £475.

Firearms are more varied in quality. Common, everyday matchlock and flintlock muskets may make only £80 to £100; but at Sotheby's a magnificent coral-inlaid miquelet musket dated 1792 reached £13,300.

Armour is less plentiful and generally realises good prices; helmets with mail neck guards fetched from £300, to £1,870 for a good quality example complete with its matching armguard.

European armour remains as much in demand as ever; and in a general arms and armour sale at Sotheby's on 28 October last a fine mail cape of the type known as a 'bishop's mantle' realised £2,500. A finely articulated miniature armour standing about 12in. high sold for around £1,500; and a reproduction armour in the style of the 16th century fetched some £2,000. An extremely rare mid-15th century Bohemian ceremonial arrowhead, which was found in South Africa, very rapidly reached its selling price of £8,500. At the other end of the

scale, a collection of boys' swords sold at average prices of around £80 to £120 each.

As we go to press Sotheby's London office are supplying illustrated catalogues for the sale in Monaco on 7 December of the Draeger collection — one of the most important sales of a firearm collection to take place in recent years. Over 300 lots of high quality pistols and longarms, and a few swords, are expected to realise a total of over £1 million.

On 17 November at Christie's the National Army Museum realised a

long-held ambition when they acquired, for a price of £17,840 inclusive, a New Zealand Cross awarded to Maori Constable Henare Kepa Te Ahururu for gallantry in action during the Second Maori War. This is, of course, one of the rarest of decorations: only 23 awards of the handsome cross — the local equivalent of the Victoria Cross — were ever made, and Const. Kepa's was among five awards made by the Governor without the Queen's knowledge. The cross will go on display at the Museum shortly.

**Frederick Wilkinson**



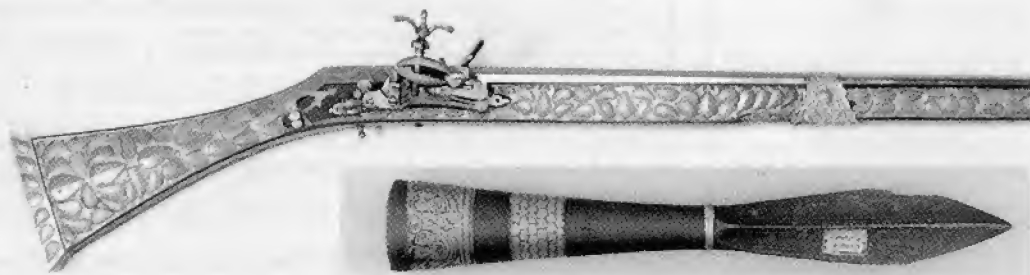
This selection of Oriental daggers, sold at Wallis & Wallis's Lewes rooms on 25 November (Sale No. 325), demonstrates the wide variation of shape and attractive decoration typical of such pieces, which are still within reach of most collectors — although prices are showing a consistent rising tendency. (Left to right): Lot 1098, unusual 19th-century brass-mounted dagger, Southern Indian, with recurved 6½in. blade, and horn hilt carved with animal head pommel, realised £85; Lot 1077, fine Omani *jambiyah*, 8in. blade, the hilt and sheath covered with silver-gilt filigree work, £210; Lot 1080, Moroccan *jambiyah*, one-

piece hilt of walrus ivory, chiselled silver sheath, £170; Lot 1099, a most attractive 19th-century silver-mounted Indian dagger with a finely watered 8½in. blade, the steel hilt thickly damascened with silver, the velvet-covered sheath silver-mounted, £190; Lot 1100, an unusual Indian *bichwa* double-bladed dagger with loop-shaped brass hilt, £60; and Lot 1088, a small but attractively decorated Caucasian *bichaq* knife, the hilt and sheath of silver with bead and filigree work overall, the pattern filled with blue enamel decoration on a white ground, £55. (Wallis & Wallis)

### Bottom:

Sotheby's 28 October sale included Lot 138, this rare Bohemian ceremonial arrowhead of the mid-15th century, which realised a hammer price of £8,500 (Sotheby's)

Prices for Asian firearms vary widely with quality. This fine coral-inlaid miquelet-lock musket, dated 1792, fetched £13,300 at Sotheby's on 14 October last (Lot 240); more modest pieces can still be had for less than £100. (Sotheby's)



the crew's slovenly habits, and is relieved when Capt. de Vriess is replaced by a regular Navy officer, Capt. Queeg (Humphrey Bogart). As time passes, however, Keith, the USS *Caine*'s executive officer Lt. Maryk (Van Johnson) and communications officer Lt. Keefer (Fred Macmurray) become increasingly alarmed by Queeg's aberrant behaviour, particularly under stress. Keefer is convinced that Queeg is paranoid, and that relieving him of his command would be justified under Navy Regulations. When Queeg endangers his ship during a violent typhoon, Maryk takes over. Inevitably there is a court martial, which forms the last part of the film.

The *Caine Mutiny* gave Bogart one of his finest rôles; and his final speech to the court martial, during which he nervously grinds two steel balls in his hand and unwittingly condemns himself, is one of the most remembered sequences of his screen career. More a character study than an action film, it remains of considerable interest to naval buffs.

Such viewers will certainly be interested by a series of documentaries made during the past 30 years for the Ministry of Defence that have recently become available on video. Each is about an hour long, and typically includes two or three shorts with common themes: e.g. *Life with the Marines* includes *The Royal Marines* (25 mins., 1983) and *Arctic Patrol* (35 mins., 1973). Other titles currently available include *The Birth and Life of a Frigate*, *Flying the Ark*, and *Out of the Air*. Interested readers should write to Royal Navy Videos, Film Archive Management & Entertainment, Phillip House, 20 Chancellors St., London W6 9RL for further information.

**Stephen J. Greenhill**

Escape from a burning SU-100 in *Wheels of Terror*.



# The Distinctions of Army Commandos, 1940-45(2)

WILLIAM Y. CARMAN  
Paintings by MICHAEL CHAPPELL

The first part of this article ('MI' No.10) described the birth of the Commandos, partly from the Independent Companies of spring 1940; the Special Service Brigade of 1940-41; and the subsequent insignia practices of Nos. 1 to 6 Commandos. This concluding part describes the known insignia of Nos. 7 to 12 and the Middle East Commandos.

## 7 Commando

Formed in July 1940 in Eastern Command, this became 2nd S.S. Coy. of the 3rd S.S. Bn. in November. It appears that before the unit developed any special characteristic signs or titles it was sent to the Middle East with 8 and 11 Cdos. in February 1941. As the time approached for the break-up of the S.S. Bns, it was retitled 'A' Bn. of the specially created 'Layforce', and served more as a conventional infantry battalion than as a Commando. It fought in Crete in May 1941, suffering heavy losses, and was disbanded. The men passed briefly to a new '1st Special Service Regiment' that June, but this too was disbanded. There is no known evidence for the wearing of any special title or insignia by 7 Commando.

## 8 Commando

Formed in mid-summer 1940, it was originally intended that the unit should be formed in Eastern Com-

mand, but in the event it was formed in London District with the aid of the Household Division. The commander was Lt. Col. R. Laycock (later to assume higher command, and to win renown in the tragic fighting in the Mediterranean). The first six troops were raised from Household units, the seventh from the Somerset Light Infantry, and the remaining three from 12 Corps and assorted units. This unit became B Coy., 4th S.S. Bn.; and suffered the same fate as 7 Cdo., becoming 'B' Bn. of 'Layforce' (named after its commander, Col. Laycock). After suffering heavy casualties in Crete it

was disbanded, apparently in July 1941.

No special signs, titles or distinctions are known. In fact, Guardsmen were ordered to discontinue their 'regimental marks', which would appear to refer to the Roman numerals worn to indicate the battalion within the original Guards Regiment. It is suggested elsewhere that men of 8 Cdo. still existed as a group until as late as June 1942, when they joined the SAS. It is also said that when in the Middle East their 'Folbot' section became No.1 SBS.

## 9 Commando

Formed under Scottish Command in mid-1940, this had become part of A Special Service Coy. of 2nd S.S. Bn. by November that year, along with 6 and 7 Independent Companies. The new company was known as the 'Scottish Company', and no doubt the khaki balmoral and black feather hackle were worn at this time. The hackle being sufficient distinction, there seemed no need for a cap badge, and this fashion continued. Men who had

worn this special hackle continued to do so throughout the war, even if they joined a new unit.

It would appear that a white-on-black 'No 9 COMMANDO' shoulder title was worn. Surviving examples have both a dot and a line under the 'o' of 'No'; but as good replicas exist, it is hard to give firm authority to these minor variations. (There was also said to be a white-on-blue variant of this title.) By July 1943 the red-on-blue general issue title, 'No 9 COMMANDO', was being worn, and the new Combined Operations sign. Black and white lanyards were favoured by some men; these may have been a privately purchased item, as too might an all-black version which has been suggested. When the green beret appeared in 1942 the black hackle was transferred to it. In 1945 the Commando Group sign was worn below the title.

To complicate matters, a photo exists showing men of this unit being reviewed by Field Marshal Alexander, thus presumably dating from not earlier than December 1943, when 9 Cdo. arrived in Italy, and probably from early 1944. The men wear the green beret with black hackle and no badge; what are clearly white-on-black or white-on-dark-blue titles '9 COMMANDO', cut rounded at the ends; the Combined Operations sign as a disc; and left-shoulder lanyards. These appear to be all one dark colour, but it is hard to be certain whether light areas are white, or highlights on glazed material.

## 10 Commando

One of the last of the original Commandos to be formed; in August 1940 troops were sought from Northern Command, but as insufficient numbers of Other Ranks were assembled to back up the 20 officers and the FANY driver who did volunteer, efforts at recruitment ceased.



Personnel of higher formations than individual numbered Commandos wore red-on-blue 'COMMANDO' shoulder titles. Here Brig. Derek Mills-Roberts, DSO, MC, studies maps before the Rhine crossing by his 1st Special Service (Commando) Brigade at Wesel in late March 1945. His green beret, on his knee, carries the gold and red lion-and-crown badge of his rank. Mills-Roberts, a Liverpool solicitor before the war, served as a major in 4 Cdo. at Dieppe in August 1942; led 6 Cdo. in Tunisia in 1942-43, and in the D-Day landings; and took over 1st S.S. Bde. when Lord Lovat was wounded on 12 June 1944.

When the Special Service Battalions were being formed late that year these officers were posted to 5th S.S. Bn. and 10 Cdo. ceased to exist. No evidence remains for any title or sign, although there has been talk of a '10' or 'TEN COM-MANDO' title, and of a sign with a Viking's head.

In January 1942 a new **10 Inter-Allied Commando** was formed. This was a very complex organisation incorporating men of many European nations, with each nationality forming its own troop. Free Frenchmen formed the 1st Troop, Dutchmen the 2nd Troop. The extraordinary 'X' or 3rd Troop included men from several, mainly Eastern European occupied countries. Belgians made up the 4th Troop, Norwegians and Danes the 5th, Poles the 6th, Yugoslavs the 7th; and the 8th Troop was also made up of Frenchmen. The diversity of nationalities was reflected in the complexities of insignia, complicated by changes of internal organisation.

The French troops are fairly well documented. First raised as 1<sup>re</sup> Compagnie de Fusiliers-Marins at Camberley in July 1941, they were retitled 1<sup>re</sup> Cie. de Fusiliers-Marins Commandos after passing through the Achnacarry training centre. Initially they wore parts of their old French Navy uniform and insignia with British battle-dress: officers and petty officers wore French peaked caps and Other Ranks the *matelot's* pompon bonnet with an 'FNFL' cap tally ('Forces Navales Françaises Libres') below a small yellow metal anchor. Rank insignia were of French naval pattern, worn as shoulder boards or slides on the shoulder straps. At the top of both sleeves were worn white-on-khaki 'FRANCE' titles, above white-on-black 'COM-MANDO' titles. On the upper right arm was worn a shield-shaped cloth patch: a red Cross of Lorraine on a white central diamond with blue (left) and red (right) upper and lower corners, the



A petty officer of the Free French 1<sup>re</sup> Cie. de Fusiliers-Marins Commandos is decorated by King George VI, probably in the second half of 1942. He wears the French naval cap of his grade; midnight-blue shoulder boards with two red chevrons, fixed over his BD shoulder straps; white-on-khaki national, and red-on-blue 'No 10 Commando' titles; and the original 'tombstone'-shaped Combined Operations sign, later normally seen cut to a disc.

#### Left:

Sgt. P.W. Christopher, 3 Cdo., photographed at HQ 1 Cdo. Bde., East Grinstead, 1945. He wears his Beds. & Herts. Regt. cap badge in his green beret; and red-on-blue 'No 3 Commando' title and Commando Group dagger sign.

whole edged yellow. This was the uniform worn for a parade in London on 10 July 1942. After they joined 10 Cdo. in August 1942 the lower of the two titles became the standard-type red-on-blue 'No 10 COM-MANDO'; and the sleeve sign was replaced by the round Combined Operations sign on both arms. After October 1942 the green beret was worn, with the shield-shaped Cross of Lorraine patch sewn to it as a badge. (There are known variations, including a kite-shaped enamelled metal badge in blue with a red Cross of Lorraine and white details and lettering.) In late 1943 the title changed to 1<sup>er</sup> Bataillon de Fusiliers-Marins Commandos. In May 1944 the unit received a new bronze metal cap badge, the

shield bearing a sailing ship, dagger and Cross of Lorraine still worn (as is the green beret pulled right) by the French Naval Commandos. At the same time the unit — about 180 strong, led by Capt. Philippe Kieffer — was transferred to 4 Cdo., whose title they wore below the 'FRANCE' title. They landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944, and captured their objective, the Casino at Ouistreham.

The Dutch No.2 Troop was raised from men of the Prinses Irene Bde.; eight officers and 40 men began commando training at Achnacarry in March 1942. On the green beret they wore their national patch, the Lion of Orange above 'NEDERLAND', embroidered in orange on a khaki backing (see item M, p.13). Metal

versions were recorded. The same sign was worn on the upper left arm, below printed red-on-blue 'No 10 COMMANDO' titles. When this was changed for the Combined Operations sign the latter was at first worn with the straight base, but later became round. Officers might wear the stiff forage cap; and Dutch rank insignia continued in use, in combinations of six-point stars on the collars. A black and white lanyard was later worn on the left shoulder.

'X' Troop, also known as No.3 Tp., 10 Inter-Allied Cdo., was really a secret organisation. Formed from anti-Nazi escapers — many of them Jewish — from occupied Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Greece, with a strong German and Austrian contingent, they served dis-





**Above:**  
A Commando named Roppert of the Free French Fusiliers-Marins serving with 10 Cdo.; apart from rank, his insignia are exactly as shown in item L, p.13.



**Right:**  
A Pole of 6 Tp., 10 Cdo. wearing regulation insignia as described in the text.

persed on intelligence and interpreting duties, under British names to protect their lives and their families if captured. They wore the General Service badge — the Royal Arms — on the Cap FS or beret; and there were probably relatively few occasions for them to wear the 'No 10 COMMANDO' title and Combined Operations sign. (There is an unexplained report of one man wearing an anchor insignia on his left chest.)

Formed in August 1942 by Capt. Danloy, No.4 Tp. — theoretically of seven Belgian officers and 100 men — began training at Achnacarry. The troop consisted of an HQ, 'A' Section (Flamande) and 'B' Section (Franco-phone). As with the Dutch, the headgear during training was the woollen cap-comforter or the helmet; the green beret bore a yellow-metal rampant lion badge on a black leather backing. The crimson-on-khaki national shoulder title is illustrated as item J, p.12; this was worn above the printed 'No 10 COMMANDO' title and the Combined Operations sign. National rank insignia were retained, officers wearing gilt six-point stars on the shoul-

der straps; it is noted that one officer had the open collar of his BD blouse lined in white. The national title was not always worn. The Commando Group sign was seen in use in 1945, before the troop became the 1<sup>st</sup> Bataillon Commando of the Belgian Army.

No.5 Troop was termed 'Norwegian' and commanded by Capt. Hauge, although it is said to have included some Danes as well. The metal badge worn on the green beret was a '7' superimposed on 'H' (for King Haakon VII of Norway) within a crowned wreath. On the upper left sleeve of the BD blouse was worn a white-on-khaki title 'NORGE'; on the right, a small Norwegian national flag in blue, red and white embroidered on a khaki patch. No doubt conventional Commando titles and Combined Operations signs were worn, but pictorial evidence is not available. Officers wore Norwegian rank insignia on the battle-dress collar.

Polish soldiers from the 1st Inf. Bn. helped form No.6 Tp. in September 1942. When they joined 10 Cdo., Order of the Commander-

in-Chief No.1 dated 10 February 1943 specified the use of the white metal Polish national eagle badge on the green beret, but without the rank insignia worn on headgear by all other Polish units. The white-on-scarlet 'POLAND' sleeve title was worn, initially above a white-on-black 'COM-MANDO' title, but this was replaced by 10 Cdo.'s standard issue red-on-blue printed title late in 1942. The Combined Operations sign was worn below the titles, initially of the straight-based type but later as a disc. The C-in-C's order specified green lanyards, 'double' (plaited ?) for officers and 'single' for men. In the usual Polish manner coloured collar patches were worn: diamond-shaped, of green piped darker green on the top two edges, for wear on battledress, and pentagonal for officer's service dress jackets. Polish rank insignia were retained. By 1 December 1943 the troop had become the 1st Independent Commando of the Polish Forces.

No.7 Troop — if it could be dignified by that title — was nominally Yugoslavian; it numbered only two

officers and 14 men, and was said to include Italians and Hungarians. Used on SOE-type missions, the tiny unit was never a conventional fighting force, and came to a dubious end. Officers are said to have worn peaked caps and the men green berets, with an oval metal rosette as a cap badge, in Yugoslav colours — blue centre, edged white, edged red. There is no photographic evidence for the use of 10 Cdo.'s title or the Combined Operations sign.

## 11 Commando

Formed from within Scottish Command in June 1940, this formed B Coy. of the 2nd S.S. Bn. the following winter. The Scottish head-dress was the balmoral or tam-o'-shanter, worn in this case with the black hackle in place of regimental or corps badges. The company was sent to the Middle East in February 1941; with the disbandment of the Special Service Battalions in March it became 11 Cdo. once more, but was absorbed as 'C' Bn. into 'Layforce'. Based in Cyprus for much of this brief existence, they saw heavy fighting in Syria and lost a quarter of their strength. 'Layforce' was disbanded in late summer 1941; some personnel remained in the Middle East under Col. Laycock, but most returned to their regiments. Lt. Col. Geoffrey Keyes was killed in November 1941 leading 32 men from this tiny residual raiding force, now under command of Eighth Army, on the abortive attempt to kill Rommel at Beda Littoria.

Even after disbandment officers were known to continue to wear the black hackle; but there is no evidence for any other distinctions — a light green lanyard said to have been worn in the Middle East is unconfirmed.

## 12 Commando

Formed from British Troops in Northern Ireland (BTNI) in August 1940, mainly from Irish regiments but with some Welsh personnel. This

unit remained in N. Ireland when the S.S. Bns. were being formed, designated Northern Ireland Special Service Company (under Lt. Col. S.S. Harrison), and considered as a Special Service half-battalion. In March 1941 it was renamed 12 Cdo. BTNI. The unit made many satisfactory raids, but the numbers dwindled, and the last recorded operation was on the night of 3/4 September 1943. The unit was disbanded in December 1943, the men going to 9 Commando. A special shoulder title was worn in yellow on blue — see item I, p.12. Subsequently the standard issue red-on-blue 'No 12 COMMANDO' took its place. No other distinctions are known.

## MIDDLE EAST COMMANDOS

Some of the other multifarious Commando and raiding units which appeared, often briefly, during the war have no place in this article. The several Royal Marine Commandos fall beyond our scope; as do 14, 30 and 62 Cdos., which properly fall under other categories of special forces. No unit distinctions are known. However, in the Middle Eastern theatre the Army did create new Commando formations with local differences.

50 Cdo. and 52 Cdo. were formed from British troops in Egypt and Palestine in or soon after November 1940, the former under Lt. Col. G.A. Young, the latter commanded by Lt. Col. Fox

Davis. In February/March 1941 the two units, with only about 300 men each, were amalgamated to become 'D' Bn., 'Layforce', perhaps also known as the Combined (Middle East) Commando — details are patchy, since no Unit History exists in the Public Record Office. Badly mauled on Crete in May, they returned to Egypt very understrength. It is said that some 70 ex-Spanish Republicans, who had arrived there via France and Syria, were taken on strength. The unit was disbanded in late summer 1941; though individuals may have remained in Egypt in Col. Laycock's small residual raiding unit attached administratively to 6 Division, and sometimes known as Middle East Commando.

A unique feature of 50 Cdo. was the special knuckle-duster knife which they carried instead of the normal 'FS' pattern. Small brass facsimiles of this knife were worn as headdress insignia, especially in the Cap, FS, Khaki; examples are extremely rare, vary individually, and are virtually impossible to authenticate, but the badge did exist and was worn. Khaki drill clothing was worn, although battledress is said to have been issued for the first time for the Crete operation. A bush hat was also worn, often turned up on the left side (though it is said that the

continued on page 43

### Left:

Commando shoulder titles, woven in red on blue. The differently shaped 'Commando' titles are unexplained.

### Below:

Interesting Bren gun team of 6 Tps., 10 Cdo.; the date is probably early 1943. The multi-coloured lanyard is puzzling; the authorised lanyard was plain green. The gunner retains Polish officer cadet's silver shoulder strap piping and cuff lace.

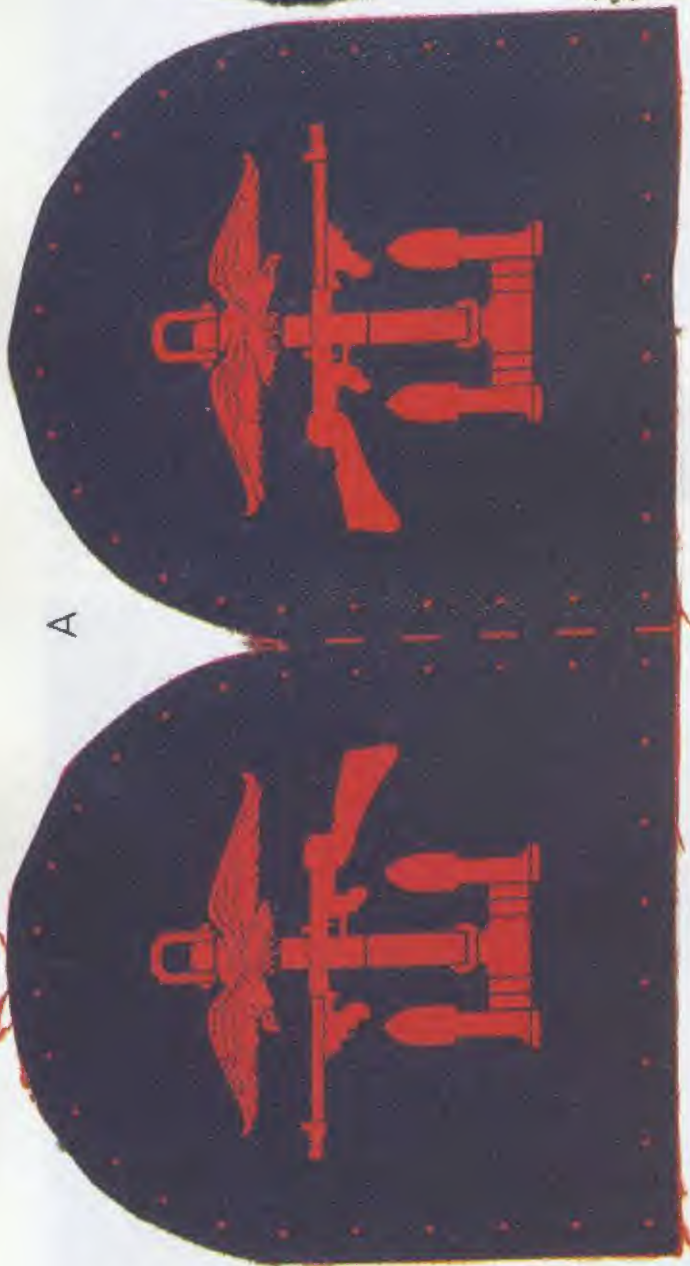




B



A



F



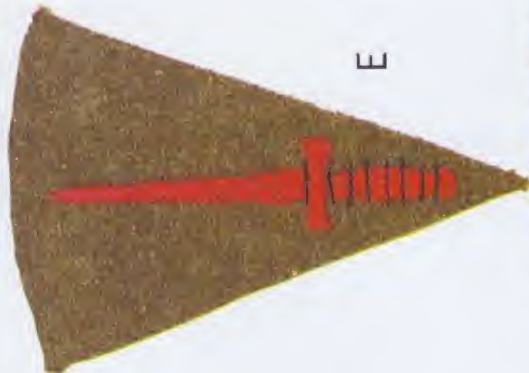
G



D



E



C



I



J



H





(A) Combined Operations sleeve signs, printed version, as issued in 'handed' pair.

(B) Combined Operations sleeve sign cut to disc shape. This woven version had a darker blue background than the printed sign.

(C) Commando Group sleeve sign, in unusual printed version. This was reportedly little worn, perhaps because it was not colourfast, but evidence is anecdotal.

(D) Woven Commando Group sign as normally worn in place of Combined Operations sign from December 1944.

(E) Unexplained variant on khaki backing, possibly produced to differentiate Army from Royal Marine insignia.

(F) Sleeve sign, Special Training Centre, Loch Ailort, 1940-42.

(G) Sleeve sign, Special Service Bde. HQ, 1940-41.

(H) Strikingly coloured but unexplained shoulder title, 1st Cdo. Bde., 1944-45?

(I) Shoulder title, 12 Cdo., 1941?

(J) National shoulder title, No.4 Troop, 10 Cdo., from 1942.

(K) Lt. G.A. Keen, formerly Black Watch, on staff of Commando Basic Training Centre, Achnacarry; from a group photograph, 1942-43? He wears the green beret with the black hackle suggesting previous service in 9 or 11 Cdo.; and the disc of Cameron of Lochiel tartan identifying staff. His service dress tunic is of the Scottish 'doublet' pattern.

(L) Lieutenant de vaisseau Philippe Kieffer, 1<sup>er</sup> Bataillon de Fusiliers-Marins Commandos, 10 Cdo., 1943. The commander of the Free French element was photographed wearing the green beret with pre-May 1944 cloth insignia; French naval officer's ranking (fouled anchor and stripes in gold on midnight blue backing worn as shoulder strap slide); white-on-khaki 'France' title, red-on-blue 'No 10 Commando' title, and Combined Operations sign.

(M) Capt. Mulders, commanding the Dutch No.2 Troop of 10 Cdo.; from a group photograph, 1943? He wears the national patch as a beret badge, and conventional title and sign on both sleeves.

(N) Capt. Hauge, commanding the Norwegian No.5 Troop of 10 Cdo.; from the same group photograph. Note beret, single sleeve title and flag patch, and rank insignia.

The insignia, shown actual size, are taken from photographs, photostats and drawings of items no longer available for photography.

(O) Sleeve sign, Signals, Special Service Bde. HQ, 1940-41.

(P) Locally-made cap badge, 50 Cdo.; Egypt, 1940-41? From photographs of surviving examples, which are crudely made and differ individually.

(Q) Shoulder title, 52 Middle East Cdo., 1941; from photograph of surviving example.

(R) Shoulder title variant, Commando Depot, Achnacarry.

(Michael Chappell)





# The Medieval Footsoldier 1460-85

## (3) Edged Weapons and Helmets

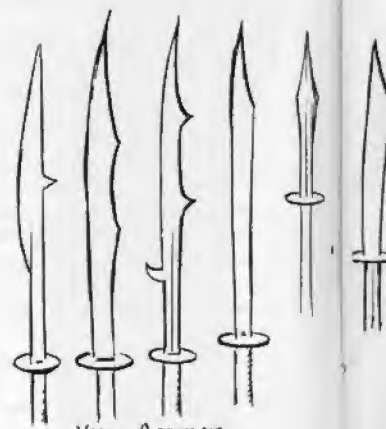
CLIVE BARTLETT and GERRY EMBLETON

Because of the vast scope of the subject, this article is not meant to be, cannot be, a history of 15th-century weapons and helmets; nor does it attempt, for reasons explained in the text, any dating or categorisation. It is simply an illustrated introduction to the subject. Our illustrations show some surviving swords, daggers, polearms and helmets, coupled with examples taken from contemporary manuscripts, engravings, woodcuts and paintings all dating between 1440 and 1500.

Study of these sources clearly shows that the variety of equipment was immense, with 'cross-fertilisation' and mixing of styles through war, travel and trade. There was a constant mass production of arms and armour in varying degrees of simplicity and quality, with merchants and 'second-hand dealers' shifting stock around Europe, to be bought and issued by commanders of varying generosity, or directly by soldiers of varying prosperity.

Very few genuine 15th-century examples survive and, as always, one must beware of generalising from

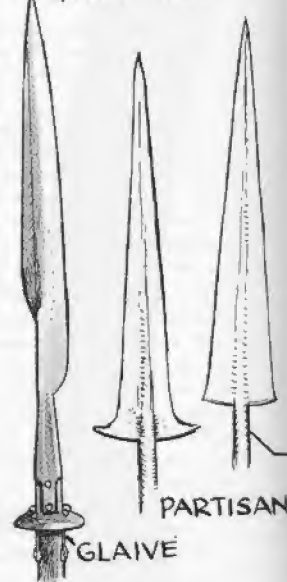
these and talking of 'types' based on them. 'Types' do appear and sometimes they can be uniform<sup>(1)</sup>; but often they conform in general shape only, and vary in detail. What has, unfortunately, failed to survive are examples of some of the very elaborate, even fanciful helmets and armour occasionally pictured in manuscripts. Sometimes this is fantasy armour used as an artistic convention to depict allegorical, historical or Biblical subjects, usually Greeks, Romans and Saracens; but the authors are of the opinion that many of these helmets etc. are accurately depicted — subject, of course, to the skill of the artist<sup>(2)</sup>.



Very Common  
in Illustrations:



GERMAN 1430'S



PARTISAN  
GLAIVE

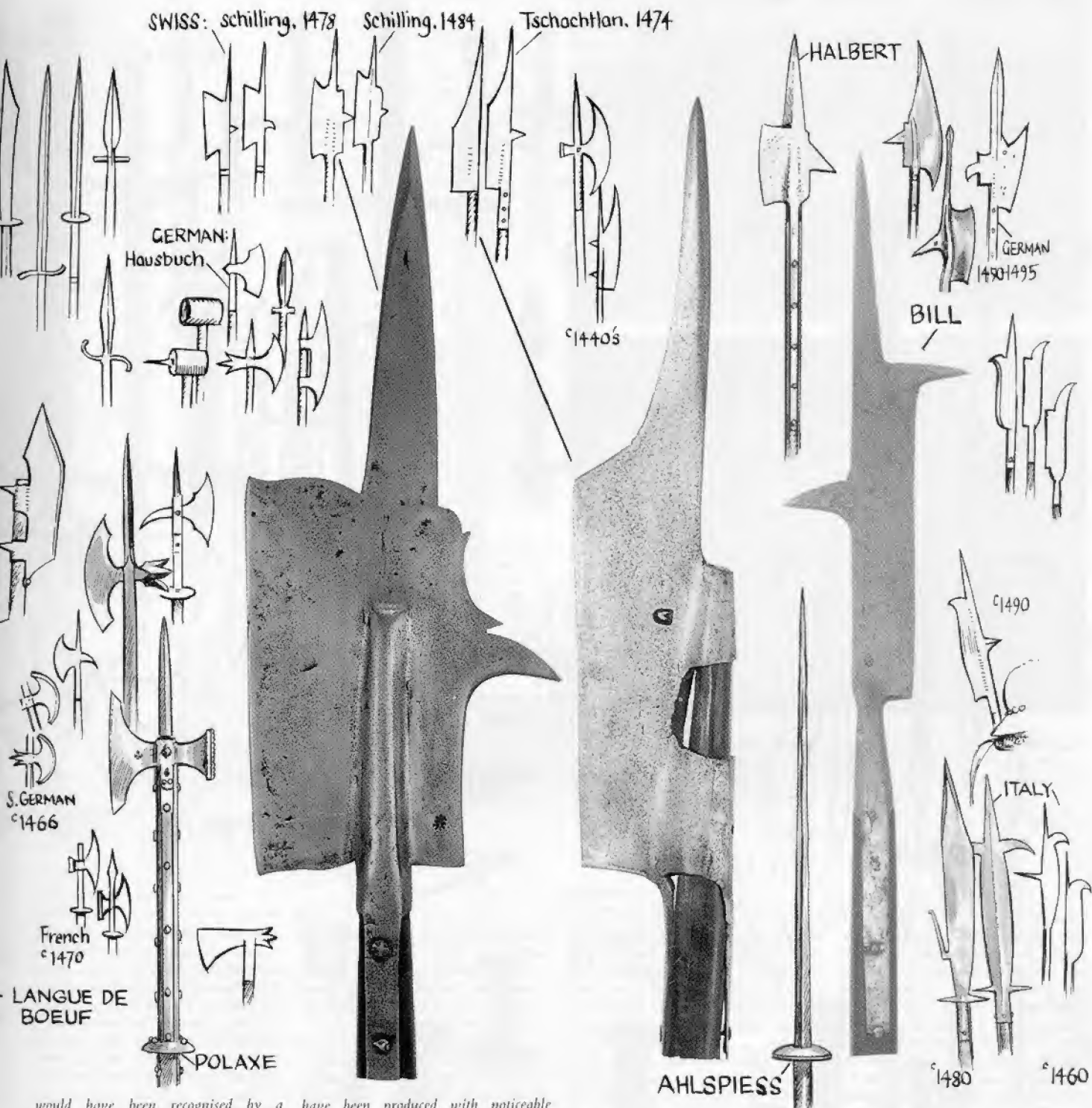


### Left:

This drawing is a detail from a design for a tapestry in the Triumphs of Caesar series commissioned by Charles the Bold. The 'Roman' army is pictured, in the artistic convention of the day, in contemporary armour and clothing — in this case, Burgundian. Notice that very similar, almost identical visored sallets are worn by all classes of soldier. The footsoldiers in left foreground are carrying glaives. (Bern Historical Museum)

### Polearms

Pick up any book on the history of staff weapons and you will find long lists of halberds, bills, poleaxes, glaives, volgues, mauls, langue-de-bœufs, gisarnes, etc. etc.; however, it is unlikely that many such definitions



would have been recognised by a 15th-century soldier. Most of the nomenclature now used was coined by the early Victorian authorities, taken by them from numerous references of different nationalities and periods. But the great majority of extant pole weapons to which they were applied were of a later date — and many of these highly stylised, designed for procession and not war<sup>(3)</sup>.

The same terminology is now applied retrospectively to 15th-century weapons, giving the impression of greater intended design variations than there ever really were. A 'halberd' to a Swiss could have been a 'bill' to an Englishman; they both appear to be direct descendants of the same agricultural implement — and many polearms appear to be derivatives of them. In the absence of standard army patterns, any 'type' of pole weapon commissioned from different forges could

have been produced with noticeable variations. Further, the English army is written of as consisting of archers and 'billmen', and the 1475 College of Arms MS lists archers and 'spearmen'; but contemporary illustrations always show a variety of polearms. Surely these are simply collective terms, rather like the later use of 'riflemen'?

Two examples taken from our drawing serve to illustrate the above points: a partizan (or partisan) is now recognised as a staff weapon with a long triangular blade flanked by two much smaller ones, but the drawing at bottom left shows a contemporary MS example now classed as such but really only a variation of the langue-de-boeuf (ox-tongue) to its right<sup>(4)</sup>. Secondly, the line of weapons along the centre top are all taken from Swiss chronicles depicting the same events of the Burgundian war; yet those in the 1478 version of Schilling

differ from those of the 1484 version, and both differ from the Tschachtlan of 1474. Which, if any, were the 'halberds' actually used by the Swiss?

The weapons at top left are those very often seen in contemporary art and all, except the 'boar spear' on the right of this group, would probably have been classed together as 'glaives', and were used for thrusting as well as cutting. All of them have a guard, in most cases a rondel, protecting the hand from an enemy's weapon 'riding' down the blade. The 'mauls', or large mallets, pictured next to the glaives are often written of as a favourite weapon of the English archer; but this seems to have been an invention of later historians. Illustrations of them are quite scarce, and the authors have never seen one, or a contemporary written reference, that associates them

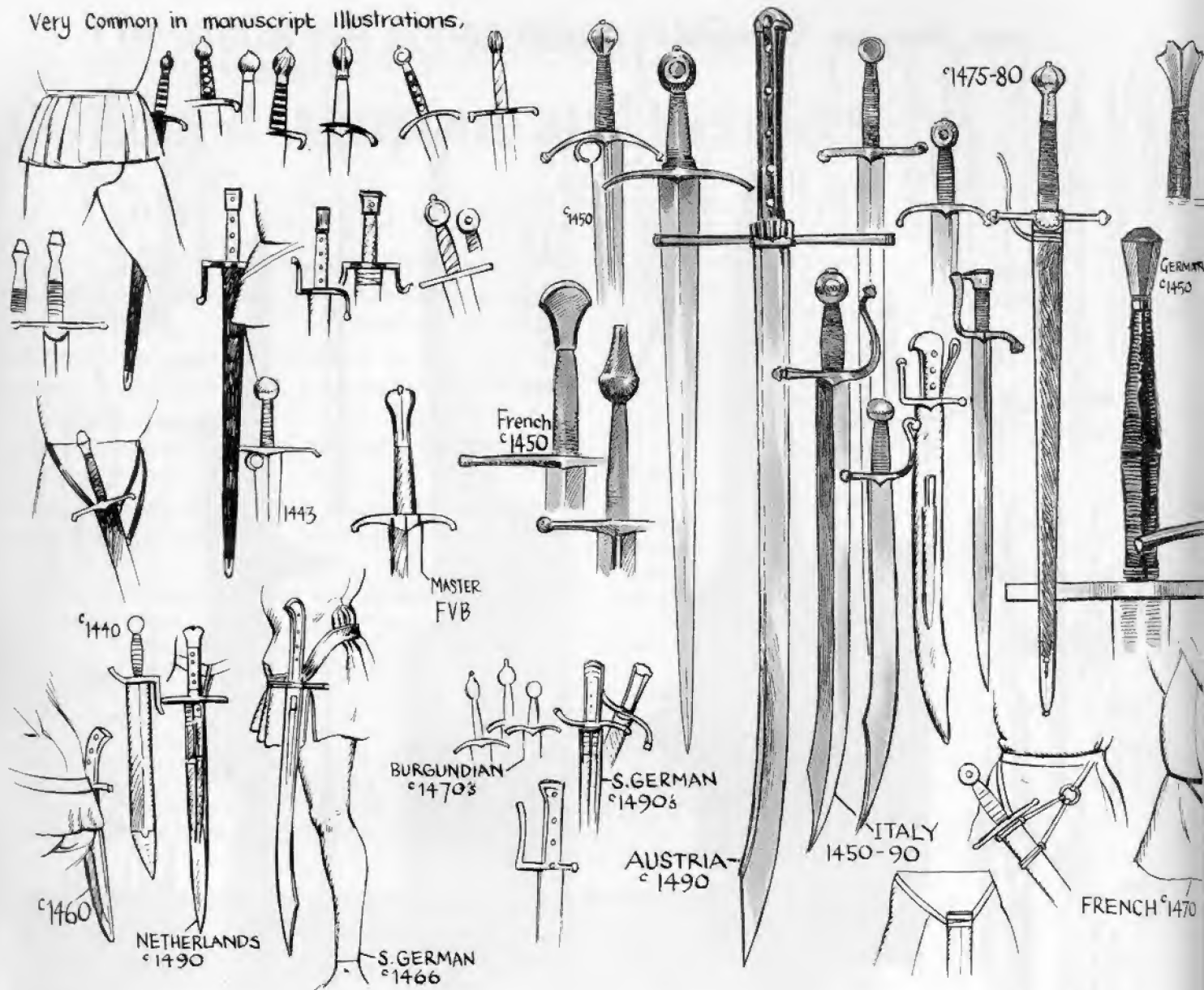
particularly with the English at this period. Charles the Bolds' ordinances did decree that his archers should carry a lead mallet, but whether as a weapon or just to hammer in their stakes is not made clear — perhaps both?

The 'polaxe', shown left foreground, was a better quality weapon and a favourite of the knightly class, often used for single combat in the tourney ring. The 'ahlspiess' seems to have been particularly popular in Austria, the Vienna Arsenal containing many in 1444, and also as a knightly weapon in the 'champ clos'.

All the weapons had metal strips of varying lengths, 'langets', holding the blade to the shaft. Sometimes forged in one with the blade, sometimes riveted separately, they also prevented the shaft being cut through.



Very Common in manuscript illustrations,



## Swords

Most knightly swords could equal in quality, finish and sharpness any of the now revered Japanese blades. Even the mass produced swords of the common soldier were not heavy, crude weapons. 'Single-handers' weighed an average of only 2-3 lb., the hand-and-a-half, or 'bastard', about 3-5 lb., and even the large double-handers only averaged 5-7 lb. These last required special fighting techniques, and were favoured particularly by some of the Swiss and German professional soldiers. Care must be taken to avoid classing any of the much heavier 'bearing' swords, designed for processions, as fighting swords.

The soldiers' blades were produced in some large manufacturing centre, such as Solingen in Germany, then supplied to trading fairs, merchants or retailers. The blades could have been fitted with a hilt, and scabbard, at any point between manufacturer and customer. As an example of supply: in the late 1470s a cache of 17 swords was found on a riverbed at the site of the battle of Castillon (1453). Of the 17, nine are identical, and three seem to have been mounted by the same hilt-maker. The other eight, although of different styles, contain two sets of 'twins'. As R. Ewart Oakeshott says, the nine are as much

alike as any nine cavalry sabres of the English 1796 Regulation Pattern would be, and all '... reinforce and stabilise the belief that while medieval swords were not made to patterns in any 'Regulation' manner, they do fall into clearly defined 'families' ...

The 14th century had seen the shape of the blade change from having a wide rounded tip towards, by the early 15th century, a narrow, sharply pointed one designed for thrusting as well as cutting. However, any attempt to date swords by their shape comes up against the possibility of older blades being resharpened so often that they assumed the shape of later ones; and that many blades would have been re-hilted — or even hilts re-bladed.

Some illustrations of the last quarter of the 15th century have examples of hilts with extra guards, a design usually associated with the next century. These were perhaps introduced from Spain and Portugal where such swords were more widespread. The most common of these features is a ring (e.g. top, centre left of our drawings) protecting the forefinger when crooked over the cross ('quillons' is a word adopted at the end of the 16th century and not used in the 15th or earlier). This grip, which aids control, is

sometimes seen being used by swordsmen without the benefit of the ring! The shorter, sometimes slightly curved, single-edged falchion type of sword invariably had a bar, rising from the cross, to protect the hand.

Scabbards were usually made of wood with a covering of thin leather stitched or glued on, the single seam or join running up the back of the scabbard. Even though these were an expendable item which must often have been broken in combat, they were close-fitting and finely made. Some sword hilts had a small flap of leather between the grip and the cross to stop moisture running into the scabbard. Some scabbards also had a small pocket containing a knife and/or a sharpening steel.

At this period the sword when worn was held at an angle, as shown bottom right in our accompanying illustrations, which also shows details of some of the metal 'chapes' fixed to the tip of the scabbard. One type of swordbelt consisted of a single strap running from one side at the top of the scabbard, around the waist and back to the scabbard close to, but on the other side from, its starting point. This necessitated the sword being worn close to the waist and virtually horizontal, a style mostly

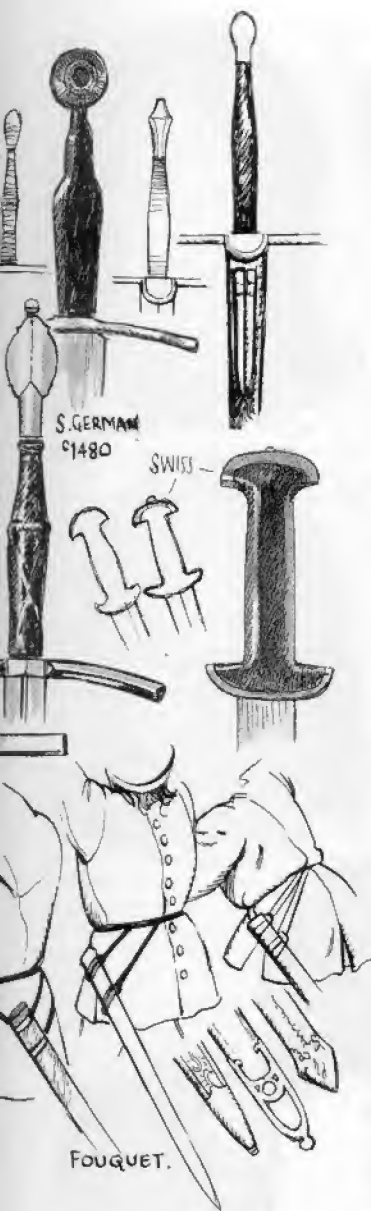
associated with the later Swiss and German Landsknechts. Often the strap divided at the back of the waist, with one half returning to the top of the scabbard, the other to a point about a third- to half-way down. The most common swordbelts were similar to this, but had a separate waistbelt with the three straps emanating from it in some way.

The use of metal rings at the suspension points, popular in earlier centuries, had given way (though not universally) to simpler, but ingenious methods of wrapping or lacing the straps around the scabbard. There was often a moulded ridge a couple of inches from the top of the scabbard to stop the strap from slipping up.

Some Swiss chronicles show soldiers apparently with shoulder belts, but we take these to be waistbelts worn over the shoulder. It should be added that these same chronicles often show Swiss soldiers without any swords.

## Daggers

Not all soldiers are shown wearing daggers, although it is probable that all carried a knife of some sort. Even these may not necessarily have been of true military styles, but rather simple peasant types used mainly for eating, which

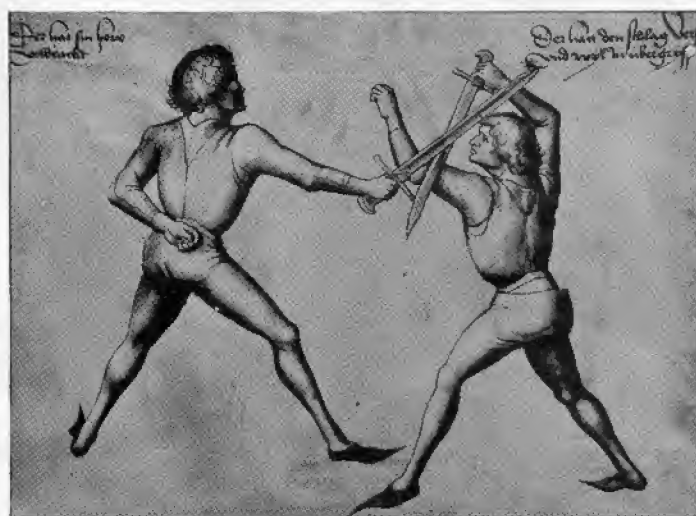
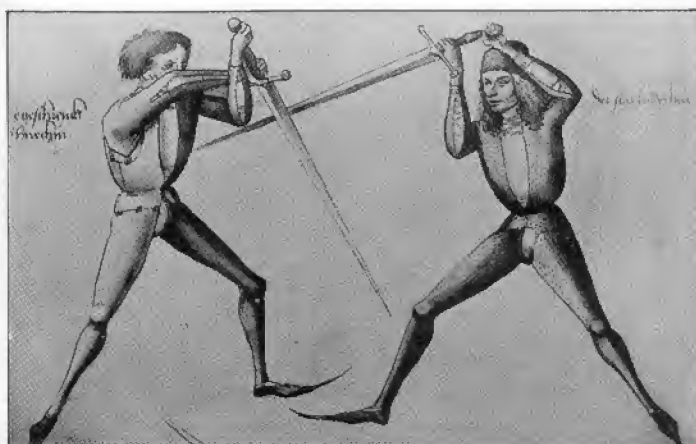


Our illustration shows: (A) A late 15th-century dagger found in the Thames, the hilt remarkably like the so-called 'Swiss' style. (B) A fine Burgundian rondel dagger of c.1490. (C) Three rondel daggers found in London. (D) Two rondel dagger scabbards. (E) Typical 'Swiss' daggers of the 1470s-1490s. These were of many lengths, some so long as to be carried as short swords. Also popular in Southern Germany but scarce elsewhere, this hilt type developed into what has become known as the 'Holbein' dagger of the next century. (F) From the Swiss chronicles of the 1470s-1490s, showing the common Swiss method of hanging the long daggers in front of the body. (G) Simple English bollock knife of c.1480. (H) Fine Flemish dagger and scabbard, c.1460. (I) Large German knives and dagger, the knives more domestic than military. (J) Daggers with pommel and cross so typical of the 14th, 16th and 17th centuries were rare but some examples from the late 14th century, such as this, must still have been in use in the 15th. (K) Showing the common method of suspension, described above.

#### Right:

Many people believe that fencing expertise was not developed until the 16th-century; but professional soldiers of any period have always practised and refined their skills, and the 15th century was no different. Shown here are two illustrations from the 270 in the 1467 Austrian 'Talhoffers Fechtbuch' of fighting techniques.

The first shows combat using hand-and-a-half swords. Notice the position of the hands; in this section of the book the hands are shown placed on many parts of the grip and blade, with the pommel and cross used offensively.



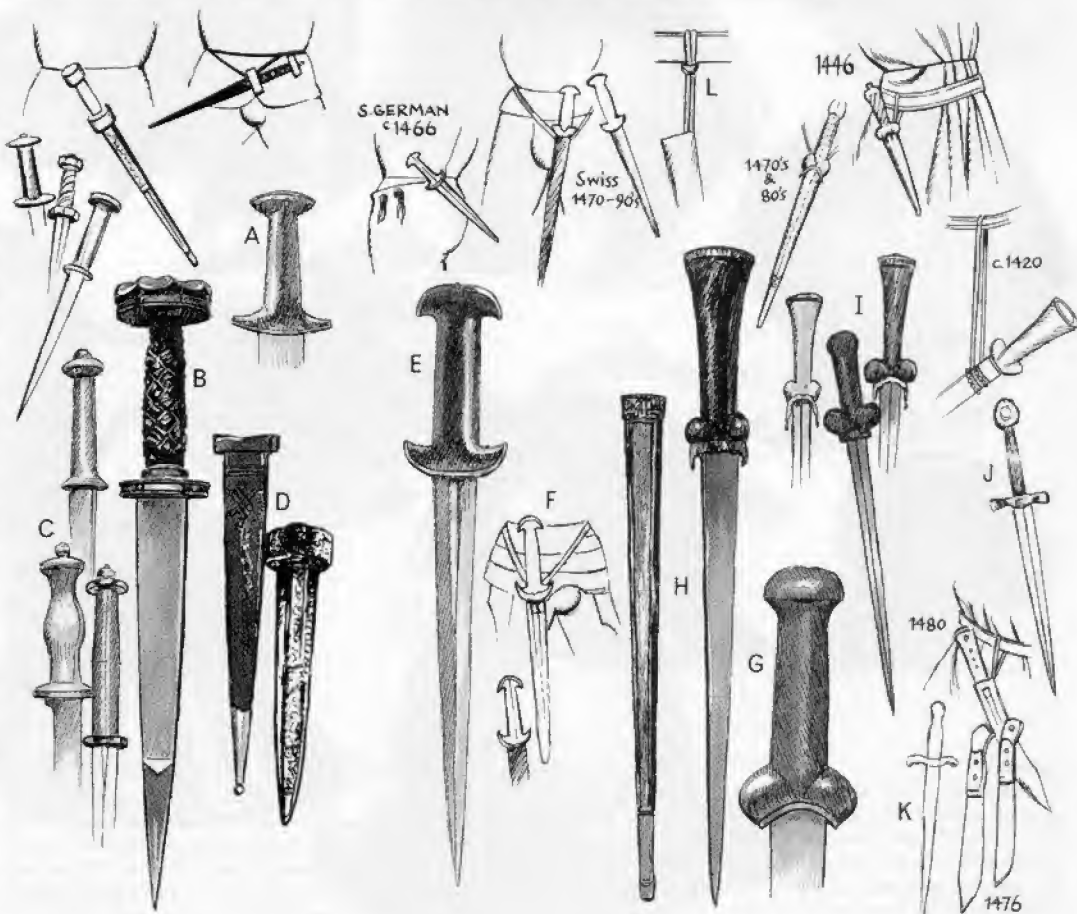
The second shows combat between single-edged falchions, here demonstrating a parry for the cut to the head. Notice the broad 'spur' of metal sticking out

from the cross shielding the hand. The figure on the left is in the classic fencing posture. (Private collection: photographs John Howe)

could have been quite small and inconspicuous. Some knives would inevitably have been made from broken sword blades.

The most popular and widespread military daggers were of the 'rondel' and 'bollock' types, the hilts varying in quality from beautiful examples of the jeweller's art to crude home-made pieces<sup>(6)</sup>. The rondel guards varied considerably in size, even on the same hilt, and in thickness. Some rondel blades were very long; one example in the Wallace Collection is 15½ inches. In case of any doubt, 'bollock' was certainly intended as a sexual reference and there are illustrations, particularly of Phillip the Goods' Burgundian court, showing them apparently being worn centrally at the front of belts in a deliberately suggestive manner. In the more squeamish Victorian period the term was modified to 'bollock', and is still so written in many catalogues.

Strangely, the most common form of suspension for all classes is shown as simply a loop of cord from the waistbelt, this in spite of the fact that during any violent motion the weapon must — as reconstruction has shown — toss and swing about uncomfortably. Sometimes the dagger is shown worn between a purse and the belt, perhaps one method of keeping it stable.







### Helmets

The three main types of helmet can be classified as the sallet, the barbuta and the kettle-hat<sup>(6)</sup>. However, these terms encompass such a wide variety of styles that true categorisation is impossible. Though armours were made in most

countries, the main centres of production and supply for the whole of Europe were Germany (particularly Augsburg) and Italy (particularly Milan). Both centres produced armour to the desired fashion of the customer, so that Italy exported helmets to Germany in the German

fashion and vice-versa. North-west Europeans seem to have preferred a style that combined features of both. Contemporary illustrations indicate that the most popular helmet throughout Europe was the visored sallet. The original 'celata' and 'barbuta' spread from Italy in the

early 15th century, but over the next 20 to 30 years the terms came to be used indiscriminately and the dividing line merged. In effect, by our period the barbuta had become a particular variation of the sallet. Briefly, the basic designs are as follows:

## Sallet

Consisting of a rounded skull that curves slightly and gracefully in towards the neck, then out again, and having a central combed ridge with a 'keyhole' slot in the top allowing for some form of crest; reaching just below the ears and sweeping backwards to terminate in a small 'tail'. This tail became longer towards the end of the century and was sometimes articulated. Either open-faced, 'enclosed' — when an eye slit was cut into the metal (see helmets **S1**, **S2**, **S3**, **S4** in the accompanying drawings — which are, NB, not to scale) — or visored. The visor was 'hinged' each side to the skull by a large rivet and could either have an eye slit cut through it (see **S5**, **S6**, **S7**) or, much less commonly, could be shaped to leave a gap between the top of the visor and the brow. Only upon German sallets towards the end of the century does there appear any catch or prop to hold the visor open or shut, otherwise the tightness of the hinge rivets seems to have been sufficient. Some open-faced sallets had a reinforcing piece riveted to the brow of the helmet (see **S9**, **S13**, **S14**).

Contemporary illustrations occasionally appear to show the enclosed sallet worn back on the head (i.e. the brim above the eye line) and, very commonly, the visored sallet left open, even in battle scenes. It may have been an artistic convention to show faces, but perhaps helmets were not closed until the soldier was actually in the thick of things. The authors have both tried original examples and excellent reproductions and, certainly, if one relies on the eye slit alone vision is drastically (dangerously?) restricted — a problem especially for

## Barbute

Like the sallet, consisting of a rounded skull with the graceful inward curve, and central combed ridge with keyhole slot. However, the barbute is distinguished by falling deeper towards the shoulders and is always open-faced, though some variations had a fixed nasal bar (**B3**), and others had the cheek pieces coming round to form a 'T'-shaped eye slit (**B1**). It can be seen from the above descriptions that helmet **B4** could be classed as either a barbute or sallet.

## Kettle-hat

Consisting of a skull with a wide brim, the skull of a variety of shapes. The brim either sticks straight out, or slants down to cover the sides and back of the head while allowing the wearer to see forward (helmets **K3**, **K4**, **K5**, **K7**). Sometimes the brim sloped so far down that eye slits were cut through it (**K8**, which could perhaps be classified as a sallet), or 'cutouts' were incorporated into its edge (**K6**). Helmet **K5** in particular is a superb example of the armourer's skill. Helmet **K3** was found on the site of the battle of Morat (1476).

These three types of helmet were produced in all qualities and worn by all classes of soldier; but in between and around them are a variety of designs, often with extra features. Illustrations often show small sallets or caps with a large rondel fixed to each side for extra protection, perhaps riveted to either the

chin strap or the actual skull. A few helmets have what appear to be small hinged nasal bars. Some caps were constructed of small metal or horn overlapping plates set vertically or horizontally.

One important feature apparently never before commented on and yet very common, is an extra 'tail' attached to the back of the helmet, probably as further protection for the neck. These appear to take the form either of a wide leather strap with metal tips, rather like a belt end<sup>(1)</sup>, or small tapering metal articulations<sup>(2)</sup>. Unfortunately, no helmets survive that have any of the above features.

Like swords, helmets were capable of long usable life, and it is quite likely that some were of an earlier period refurbished and slightly altered (see **S9**); and, of course, many damaged helmets could be cut down and made into caps. The Tower of London has a helmet in its collection (Class IV no. 8) which was originally a 15th-century sallet but has been altered in the 17th century for use in the Civil War. Apart from the 'segmented' type, at this period helmets were almost always forged from one piece and cleverly beaten out so that the thickest part was to the front, with thinner metal to the sides and rear. The few exceptions are some kettle hats where the brim is riveted to the skull, and some German sallets where the bottom half is riveted to the top by the lining rivets.

Helmets were generally finished 'white' (i.e. polished) but were also occasionally painted or covered in fabric (See **S15** and **B4**). Sir John Fastolfe's will of 1459 lists 24 '... cappes stuffed withe horne and sunn withe mayle ...' which infers a fabric base and covering. One type of late German enclosed sallet, known as 'Black Sallets', were left rough from the making, unpolished and retaining the hammer marks. All types were often decorated with feathers, orbs or scarves. In the Burgundian army of Charles the Bold a system of rank insignia was developed using small pennants in the crest slots<sup>(3)</sup>.

As examples of helmet weights: sallet **S2** is 6lb.7oz.; barbute **B1** is 5lb.12oz.; kettle-hat **K8** is 7lb.5oz.

## Below:

Helmets had to be comfortable and secure and were therefore fitted with a padded lining. The row of rivets visible around the skull of the helmet held a leather strap to which this lining was stitched. The lining might be stuffed linen or canvas, quilted and divided into segments, sometimes with a drawstring at the top. Two surviving linings have four and ten segments. The chin straps, usually buckled but sometimes tied, were either attached to the leather strap or riveted separately to the helmet.

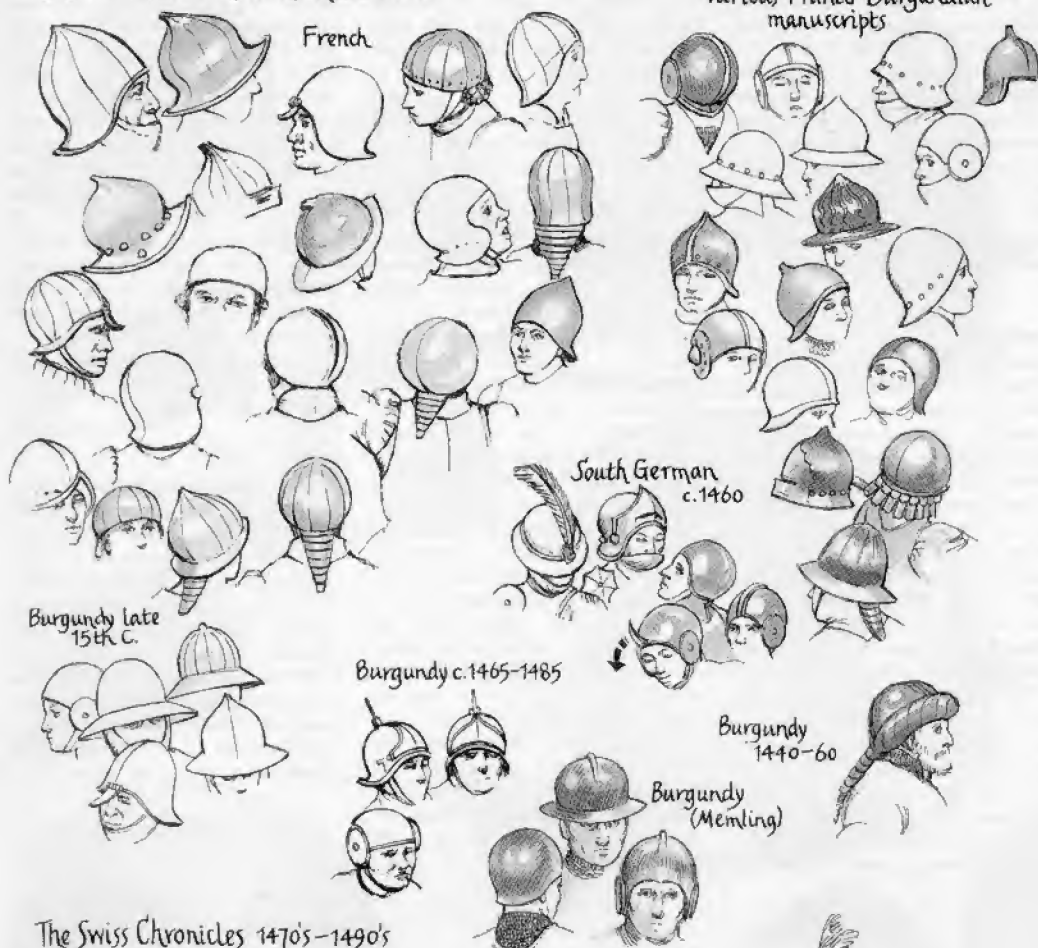




## Le Livre des Tournois du Roi René c 1460

## Various Franco-Burgundian manuscripts

French



The Swiss Chronicles 1470's-1490's



South German 1470's-1490's



Anglo-Burgundian c.1485-90

This illustration is a rough guide to some of the many varied helmet forms and shows some of the features mentioned in the text — neck guards, nasal bars, rondels, feathers, scarves etc. All are taken directly from MS illustrations.

### Notes

- (1) For example, the identical sallets worn by the Scottish Archer Guard of Charles VII: see 'MI' no.7, *Livery Coats & Badges*.
- (2) cf. some of the 'grotesque' helmets of the next century.

- (3) The Wallace Collection catalogues list 23 types; but look, for example, at the definitions given for 'Spetum' and 'Runka', and compare to partizan.
- (4) To cover all eventualities, the Wallace catalogue lists 'ox-tongue partizan'...
- (5) See the later examples raised from the Mary Rose.
- (6) The other main type, the 'Armet', was only used with full suits of armour.
- (7) cf. the many examples in the

Beauchamp Pageant.

- (8) cf. the many examples in *Le livre des Tournois du Roi René*.
- (9) cf. *Armies of Medieval Burgundy 1364-1477*, Osprey Men-At-Arms series no. 144.

### Select bibliography

While it is impossible to list all sources consulted by the authors over the past ten years, the following are important:

#### Primary sources

The various Swiss chronicles by

the Schillings and Tschachtlan, in facsimile editions: almost impossible to find, horribly expensive, but a goldmine of information.

Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick KG, 1389-1439: facsimile of the original MS in the British Museum, ed. Viscount Dillon and W.H. St. John Hope (Longmans Green, 1914). Executed at the end of the 15th C, the MS reflects the styles in use at that time; a superb book of finely detailed drawings, it is now very hard to find.

*Le Livre des Tournois du Roi René*: this wonderful book has recently been republished by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Primary sources often overlooked are the numerous 'history of art' volumes published, often in fine editions, especially those illustrating the work of e.g. Dürer and the Flemish artists, much of which repays close study.

#### Secondary sources

*Histoire de France Illustrée, 'La Guerre de Cent Ans'* (Larousse, Paris): now in print again, this contains 2,000 colour illustrations, all contemporary with the 15th C, and many showing arms and armour — an absolute bargain.

*European Armour*, Claude Blair (Batsford, 1958, rp.1972): the standard work on armour.

*The Sword in the Age of Chivalry*, R. Ewart Oakeshott (Arms & Armour Press, rp.1981): if you only ever own one book on medieval swords, make sure it is this one.

*The Wallace Collection Catalogues* (2 vols., 1962): though most of the collection is of 16th and 17th C pieces, these still represent the best value-for-money introduction to arms and armour.

*Warrior to Soldier 449-1660*, A.V.B. Norman & Don Pottinger, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966; rp. as *English Weapons and Warfare*, Arms & Armour Press, 1979) a very good basic introduction to medieval warfare.

*Charles the Bold*, Richard Vaughn (Longmans, 1973): not a military study, but contains some excellent material.

Also useful are the Osprey Men-at-Arms titles MAA 94, *The Swiss at War 1300-1500*; MAA 144, *The Wars of the Roses*; and MAA 145, *Armies of Medieval Burgundy 1364-1477* — especially the latter, which uses very rich French sources.

Many history books include illustrations from the well-known contemporary sources, e.g. Froissart's chronicles, and the better *Chronique d'Angleterre* by Jean Wavrin. These are useful so far as they go; but treat with care the secondary sources which appear in too many 'coffee-table' books; and avoid at all costs the often-used Victorian reconstructions and copies of contemporary illustrations. **MI**

**To be continued:** The next part of this series will examine protective clothing, and personal equipment.

# Bringing **SHAKA** to Life



IAN KNIGHT

At last, as much as a year after the rest of the world, British viewers have the chance to see the historical epic *Shaka Zulu*. Directed by William Faure, it was first seen as an SABC television serial. It has now been released in a three-part video set by MGM/UA (catalogue number UMB/UMB 11154), with a running time of seven and a half hours.

It purports to tell the story of Shaka, the Zulu military genius who, cast out from his tribe as a boy, returned to take the throne by force — and, by conquest, to turn the Zulus into the most powerful black nation in southern Africa. In the process he reshaped the tribal geography of the entire region, destroying and incorporating rivals. The system he created survived him by fifty years, to be broken finally by the British in the war of 1879 — but even then only after the

Zulu army had inflicted a crushing defeat on Lord Chelmsford at Isandlwana.

Shaka's story obviously has a great deal of scope as an epic adventure; and that is essentially how it has been tackled. It took over four years to produce, cost a cool \$24 million, and employed a host of well-known British actors — Edward Fox, Robert Powell, Trevor Howard, Fiona Fullerton, Christopher Lee, Roy Dotrice, Kenneth Griffith and Gordon Jackson — as well as scores of Zulu actors and hundreds of extras. There are dozens of battle scenes; a shipwreck; and re-creations of part of Colonial Cape Town, as well as two *amakhandas* or Zulu military kraals, one of them on the remains of an historical counterpart.

Producing the series was fraught with difficulties. Although the funding came largely from the USA, it was shot in South Africa, where the significance of Shaka as a

black hero and father of his nation is still very much a live political issue. Liberal historians decried the project as pandering to racist preconceptions by presenting Shaka as a stereotyped black despot; reactionary critics claimed that it ridiculed the Colonial authorities, and was too 'pro-black'. Even within the black community opinion was divided. Both the Zulu Royal House and the political leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi gave the series their blessing; but this incurred the wrath of radical black elements opposed to what they considered 'Zulu chauvinism'. Finally, the South African connection has hindered international distribution.

All this controversy took place in parallel with a raging argument about the project's cultural and historical accuracy, which led to public squabbles among academics over the validity of the source material upon which much of our knowledge of

*A significant moment in southern African history: Shaka (Henry Cele), not yet risen to power but serving the Mtwana king Dingiswayo in the iziCwe regiment, debates (with some force, apparently!) the merits of his new short stabbing spear. (Emile Wessels, MGM/UA)*

the period is based.

It has to be admitted that there are a number of historical and dramatic flaws.

The series begins with the arrival of a group of white adventurers at Shaka's chief residence, Bulawayo, in 1824, when the king was at the height of his power. These whites, led by Lt. Francis Farewell RN, try to play Shaka at his own power games, outwitting him with the promise inherent in such civilised trinkets as gunpowder, and a hair-oil with apparent rejuvenating qualities. Shaka, a man who has all the power that his own culture can provide, tries in turn to exploit the whites for his own purposes; but the intrigues end in disillusion and tragedy for both sides —



Shaka and his *inDunas* confer against a background of blazing huts in a sequence set during the period known as 'the crushing' — the Zulus' rapid and ruthless expansion by conquest, c. 1817-24. (Emile Wessels, MGM/UA)

#### Below:

Shaka trains his first group of 50 warriors in his new close-quarter tactics, which in fact resembled the sword- and shield-play of the Roman legionary: the enlarged shield was used offensively to force the exposure of the enemy's ribs to a fatal upward stab. In 1816, when he came to leadership of his clan, Shaka had some 350 warriors; in 1818, when he succeeded Dingiswayo, some 2,000; and by the early 1820s, 20,000. (Emile Wessels, MGM/UA)

a theme clearly intended to carry a message for today's South Africa. The early part of Shaka's life, and in particular his invention of a revolutionary stabbing-spear and close-quarter tactics, are dealt with in a prolonged flashback.

#### ACCURACY vs. ENTERTAINMENT

All this is dramatically good stuff — although some of the early Zulu sequences are let down by truly inane dialogue — and has some historical justification. Indeed, the series makes a good attempt to follow the real sequence of events; but some of the errors should be noted.

Farewell's mission to Shaka was a purely commercial venture, not a diplomatic one, as suggested in the series; in fact the Crown tried repeatedly to distance itself from the more embarrassing activities of Farewell's party. Shaka did not have his victims impaled either in the numbers or in the manner shown: at one point they are seen to surround him like a forest of macabre scarecrows. (It is true that Shaka did have people killed out of hand, but usually by clubbing or stabbing; impalement was reserved for the specific crime of witchcraft, and these unfortunates were skewered with a stake some two feet long.) Many of the Zulu costumes are far too lavish to be realistic; and the elephant skull totem poles which adorn the re-creation of Bulawayo are pure fantasy. While the whites did play some part in the battle



of Ndolowane in 1826, the film's climactic spectacle, they did not use cannon, and most certainly did not wear elements of Zulu costume over their own clothes. (Mercifully, an episode in the original ten-hour version in which Shaka has several whites impaled has been edited out of the trimmed UK release — this is a gross misrepresentation of the historical king's behaviour towards whites.)

#### MILITARY SPECTACLE

Yet *Shaka Zulu* still has a lot to offer. It evokes the spirit of the time known in Zulu as *mfecane*, 'the crushing', very well. At times it is visually ravishing, making the most of its breath-taking locations. The long columns of warriors, bedecked with feathers and furs, running through the bush or across the sand dunes of a beach, are splendid to watch. Some of

the frenzy and spectacle of life at Shaka's court is well captured.

A great deal of time is given to military matters, showing the ritualistic way in which the Zulus and their neighbours used to wage war, how Shaka trained his men to behave differently, and the awful results. The scene in which Shaka first tries out his 'chest and horns' encircling movement on an unsuspecting foe is particularly telling; and the brutal carnage of close combat with stabbing-spears is realistically conveyed. It is pleasing to see proper attention being paid to this revolution in warfare which did, after all, alter the course of African history. (Part of the price we pay for it, however, is the attempt to invest Shaka with a mythic significance, which does lead to too much supernatural hocus-pocus in the scenes in which the assegai is first forged.)

In short, *Shaka Zulu* deserves to be widely seen as an attempt to focus attention on a crucial, neglected period of history. If it is not quite the serious historical statement which it is claimed to be, it is a brave try — which is as much as can be said for any historical epic which is inevitably governed by the values of the screen entertainment industry rather than those of documentary history. **M**

#### Opposite top left:

Henry Cele, the Zulu footballer cast in the title rôle, brings great physical presence and a convincing air of brooding menace to the part. (Emile Wessels, MGM/UA) **Bottom left:** Patrick Ndlovu plays Mudli, an advisor to Shaka's father King Senzangakhona. The costumes in the series are based on authentic Zulu designs, but are prone to a degree of exaggeration. (Emile Wessels, MGM/UA) **Right:** Reliving the spirit of his forefathers: a young Zulu in the costume of the Fasiimba, Shaka's élite regiment. The costumes worn by ordinary warriors are among the most accurate in the series. (Author's photograph)







# The Military Art of Richard Caton Woodville (I)

JOHN CANNING

The latter half of the 19th century produced, in many European countries, a rich crop of military artists. Much has been written about the French painters, the most prominent of whom were Ernest Meissonier, Alphonse de Neuville and Edouard Detaille. The British artists of the same period have not received anything like the exposure of their French contemporaries, however. While the names of Elizabeth Butler<sup>(1)</sup>, Richard Simkin and Harry Payne are all well known, perhaps the most prolific and dynamic British artist to emerge from the Victorian period was Richard Caton Woodville.

## A PRUSSIAN EDUCATION

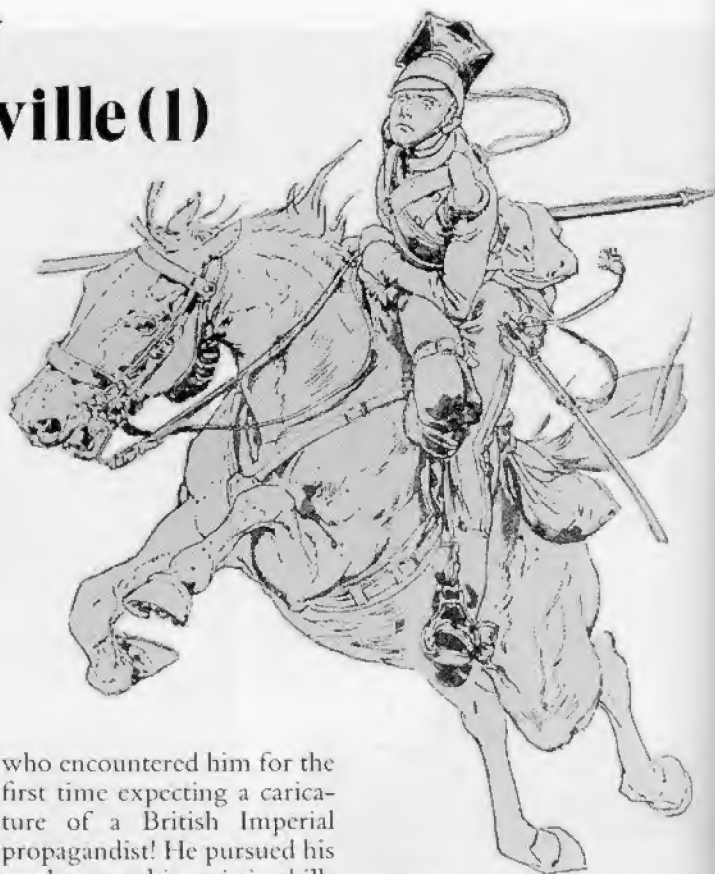
The son of an American artist of the same name who emigrated to England in the early 1850s, Richard Caton Woodville was born in London on 7 January 1856. He claimed descent from a cousin of Elizabeth Woodville, the queen of Edward IV; and on his mother's side he was the great-grandson of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving signatory of the American Declaration of Independence.

As a youth Woodville showed an early aptitude for art, and was encouraged to study. Indeed, he was eventually packed off to Germany to study at Düsseldorf under

Von Gebhart — an artist of distinctly religious tendency, and a master of 15th-century costume. It was during this period that the young Woodville first became fascinated by the martial spirit in art, which he discovered in the studio of Wilhelm Kampshausen, court painter to Wilhelm I. This spirit was to be the inspiration and driving force behind Woodville's work throughout his long and productive career.

Woodville returned to London in 1876 with a first-rate art education, a German accent, and a Prussian-style waxed moustache — the two latter features giving pause to those

who encountered him for the first time expecting a caricature of a British Imperial propagandist! He pursued his need to put his artistic skills to practice by submitting some sketches to *The Illustrated London News*, perhaps the most famous and influential of the illustrated journals which proliferated during the latter half of the 19th century. His first drawing submitted to the paper, entitled 'A Reconnaissance Skirmish during the Servian War', was accepted at once. Thus began a working relationship between Caton Woodville and the *ILN* which was to last for the better part of 50 years.



## THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

Caton Woodville's basic rôle was that of a home-based illustrator who took the rough sketches and written reports sent in by the 'specials' — the journalists in the field — and produced from them illustrations which were, in turn, made into woodcut engravings for publication in the journal.

To leaf through the collected bound volumes of the *ILN* is to be astonished at the prolific output of this one illustrator between 1878 and 1918. Literally hundreds of pictures bearing his signature illustrate scenes from the Second Afghan War (1878-80); the Zulu War (1879); the First Boer War (1881); the Egyptian campaign (1882) — from which there are four illustrations of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir alone; the Sudan (1884-85); the Matabele War (1893-94); the North-West Frontier of India (1897-98); the reconquest of the Sudan (1898); the Second Boer War (1899-1902); and the Great War, 1914-18.

Apart from these better-known British campaigns he illustrated such diverse and exotic episodes as the 'Au-

### Right:

'Mr. R. Caton Woodville at work in his studio': *ILN*, 7 December 1895. An interesting photograph of Caton Woodville at work on perhaps his most famous painting, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, this gives a good idea of the size of the original canvas.

### Above:

A study for 'Baladava'; *ILN*, 7 December 1895. Shoulder scales were not in fact worn, and 'booted overalls' only by officers; a water bottle should be worn over the haversack. The final painting also had a number of mistakes of colour, and incorrectly showed rank and file with sabretaches. The fluency and anatomical confidence of the draughtsmanship remain impressive.



<sup>(1)</sup>See 'Lady Butler: The Soldier's Artist', J. Spencer-Smith, 'M' No.8.

strian Campaign in Bosnia' (1898); 'Disturbed Ireland' (1881 *et seq.*); 'War in Tunis' (1881); 'Insurrection in Herzegovina' (1882); 'Insurrection in Northern Albania' (1883); 'Rising of North American Indians' (1891); 'Famine in Russia' (1892); 'The Trouble in Gilgit' (1892); 'Impending War between China and Japan'

(1894), and 'Trouble in Crete' (1896).

It was not even as if the tireless Mr. Woodville applied his talents solely to war and the rumours of war: the pages of *The Illustrated London News* also reveal work from his hand on such subjects as fox hunting; big game hunting in Africa, North America, India and

Europe; fishing; boating; mountaineering; romance; Christmas scenes; and genial depictions of all manner of civilian activities.

During the period 1893-97 he executed a series of drawings illustrating 20 'Battles of The British Army'. These are some of his best work for the *ILN*, and include imaginative scenes

from Blenheim, Waterloo, Crécy, Vittoria, Salamanca, Talavera and Corunna, among others. Curiously, the series did not include any battles later than Waterloo; but the sequence was clearly very popular nonetheless, as in 1902 *The Illustrated London News* offered its patrons sets of nine of these illustrations reproduced as coloured lithographs.

Woodville produced work for some of the other illustrated journals of the day, among them *The*



#### Left:

'The 43rd Attacked in Vimiero': *ILN*, 16 February 1895. The anachronistic 'Belgic' shakos, and the grenadier company officer's bearskin, may never have been worn by the 43rd, and certainly not in 1809; but the appeal of the composition is undiminished for all but the hopelessly pedantic.

#### Below:

'Battle of Blenheim: Storming the Village by the Dismounted 2nd North British Dragoons (Scots Greys)': *ILN*, 29 July 1893. There are errors of detail in the hats, coats, belts, and musicians; but again, the intended impact of the piece — rock-steady fortitude and massed weight in the attack by a fiercely disciplined body of men — seems wholly successful.







Plates from His Majesty's Army  
by Walter Richards: **above left**,  
The Manchester Regiment;  
**above right**, The Highland  
Light Infantry; **left**, The East  
Yorkshire Regiment  
**Opposite top**: 'Relief of the  
Light Brigade, Balaclava 1854',  
published as a supplement to the

'Holly Leaves' Christmas number  
of The Illustrated Dramatic and  
Sporting News, 1897.  
**Opposite bottom**: 'All That  
Were Left of Them' — the 17th  
Lancers at Modderfontein, 1901;  
published as a supplement to the  
IDSN 'Holly Leaves' number at  
Christmas 1902.







Graphic, *The Sphere*, *Black and White*, *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*; and *Harper's Magazine*, for whom he illustrated at least two historical series: 'The German Struggle for Liberty' (1891-93), and 'White Man's Africa' (1894-95). However, it was with *The Illustrated London News* that he was most often associated.

## THE PAINTINGS

Caton Woodville was just twenty-two years old when he exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first time. His painting 'Frederick the Great on the Eve of the Battle of Leuthen' attracted a favourable review a column and a half long in *The Times* from the critic Taylor. This auspicious beginning was to be followed by another lifelong association: Caton Woodville exhibited at the Royal Academy practically every year thereafter, until the exhibition in 1927 — the year of his death — of his 'Halloween 1914', depicting the stand of the London Scottish at Messines Ridge.

It is probably in his paintings rather than his monochrome illustrations that Caton Woodville's true genius shows through. There was always the danger that the force and drama of a particular picture for *The Illustrated London News* might be diluted during the process of transcription on to the wooden printing blocks by a veritable army of engravers, working against a deadline. Over the final appearance of his paintings the artist had total control.

Caton Woodville's strength was the re-creation of dramatic incidents from history — especially from Britain's Imperial wars — in wholly imaginative ways, with or without the help of a 'special's' sketches. His general knowledge of military uniforms and incidental details was both deep and broad; but it cannot be pretended that his depictions

of any specific incident, either historical or contemporary, were sufficiently deeply researched to be used today as reference without careful corroboration. He was a working illustrator, forced to meet deadlines, and he was 'only as good as his reference'. In common with his contemporaries, he was handicapped in depicting, for instance, the Napoleonic period by the lack of accurate references then available: it is hardly a serious criticism that he, too, habitually depicted Peninsular War redcoats wearing 'Belgic' shakos, or fusilier bearskins, or that he showed the Scots Greys in uncovered bearskins at Waterloo.

While his contemporary illustrations suffered from similar mistakes of detail (see

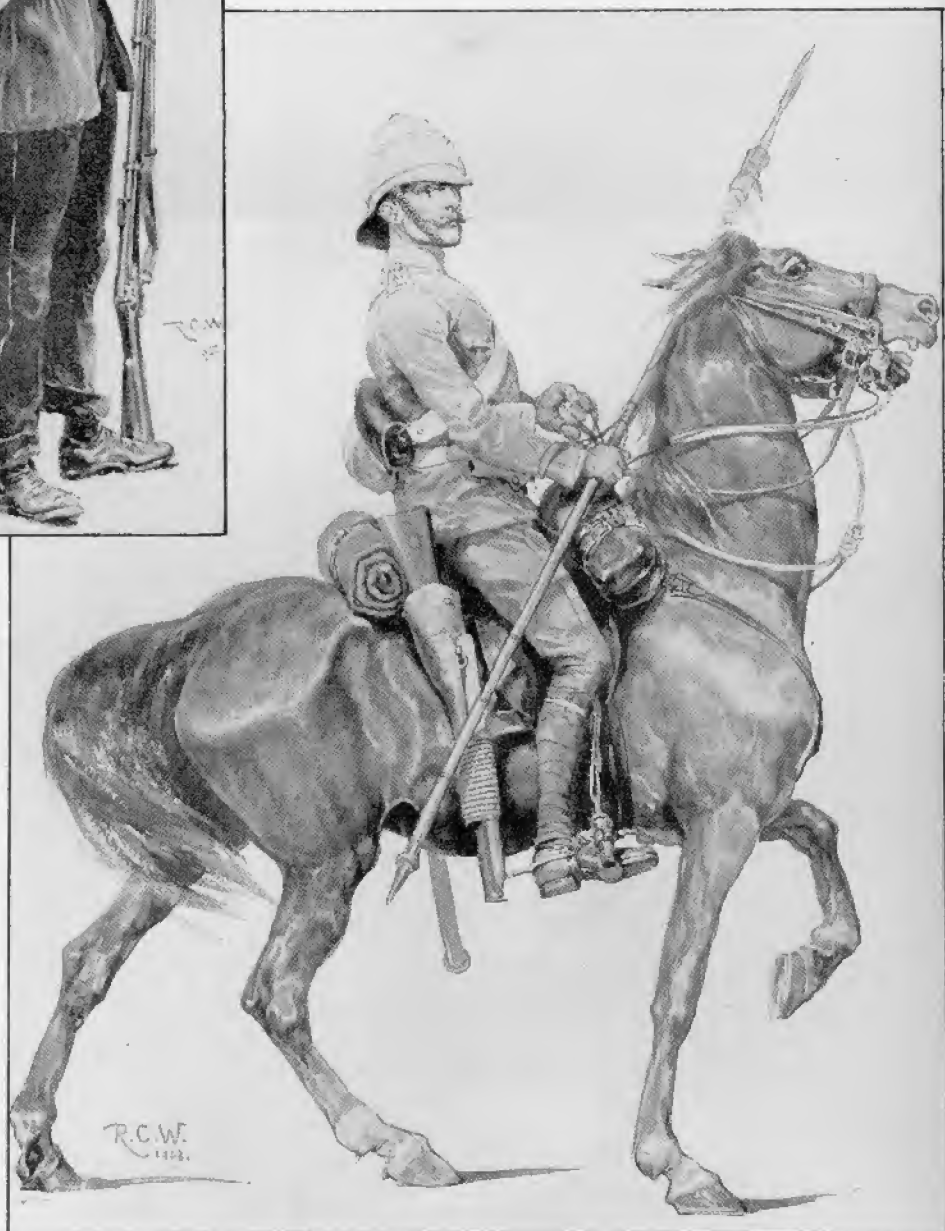
comments on the examples reproduced here), his work remains of interest for its tremendous vigour, and its often convincing re-creation of the human drama of the battlefield. Where detailed references were available, he used them: it is said that military engineers who saw his 'Badajos' were loud in their praise of his accurate renderings of the *chevaux de frise* and other items of field equipment. His readership were — obviously — not specialist students of costume history: he was not working for 'MI' — but for the market he served, he produced an extraordinary flow of work of a type to which they responded with enthusiasm. MI

To be continued



**Above:**  
A study for 'Relief of Lucknow';  
ILN, 7 December 1895.

**Right:**  
'21st Lancers (late 21st Hussars)  
in their Soudan Uniform'; ILN, 3  
September 1898. Published, coincidentally, the day after the  
regiment's famous charge at  
Omdurman, the painting was  
executed some time beforehand.  
Some errors of detail (absence of  
helmet cover and curtain, and  
shoulder chains; pouch belt instead  
of 1882 pattern bandolier) were to  
be corrected in his later painting of  
the charge itself. The sword belt  
was worn under the khaki drill  
frock, not exposed as here.



# 'The Frankfurt Collection'

D.S.V. FOSTEN  
Paintings by  
BRYAN FOSTEN

During the Second World War the German military artist Ludwig Scharf — a member of a number of historical research societies, and a friend of the Knötel family, Paul Pietsch, Friedrich Schirmer and other respected military historians — chanced one day to be in Frankfurt. While taking refreshment in a coffee house he fell into conversation with an army officer; and mentioned his lifelong interest in matters military.

His companion replied that, coincidentally, he too was interested in old German uniforms; and actually had with him in his briefcase a collection of old coloured drawings which were a family treasure. He produced a sketchbook containing drawings made by an ancestor during the Napoleonic wars, which he had intended to take to the Berlin Zeughaus or some similar institution for appraisal.

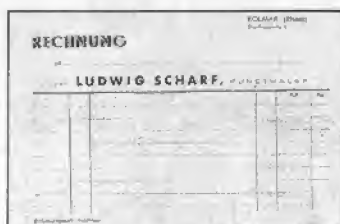
Scharf immediately recognised the unique interest of these sketches. They were mainly of uniformed figures — clearly drawn from life, on campaign — representing the various small contingents of the Confederation of the Rhine serving in Spain.

It was an opportunity Scharf could not ignore; and he begged permission to copy the sketches for his own collection. The Wehrmacht officer agreed, but regretted that he was in transit, under orders, and had to leave the next day. Scharf stayed up most of that night making careful copies of the sketches, using a stylo drawing pen and adding colour details either with coloured pencils or in note form in the margins. Since no proper drawing paper was immediately to hand, he used the only material available — the backs of his own invoices.

Scharf managed to draw many, but not all of the figures. When they finally parted the officer told him where he was staying; and promised that Scharf could finish the work the next day before his departure. In the hours before dawn Scharf was awakened by air raid sirens, and sat out a violent and prolonged RAF raid in a shelter. When he searched out his acquaintance's hotel the next morning, he found

nothing but a heap of rubble. There was no sign or record of the officer; and neither he nor his sketchbook have been seen since.

The late Ludwig Scharf's files and drawings now form part of the collection of Mr Roy Belmont Maitland; and it is with his kind permission that we are able to reproduce here some of Scharf's copies, and to reconstruct our own paintings from others. **MI**



Scharf's sketches were drawn on the reverse of a loose stack of his own printed invoices; the bold heading can clearly be seen showing through the thin paper in many of the drawings. Each sheet is 21cm x 15cm, and the drawn figures are 19cm high. The examples shown were all coloured with pencils, with additional marginal comments where necessary.



## Left:

The Schwarzburg Rudolstadt companies formed part of the 6th Rheinbund Regiment in Spain. Knötel gave the uniform as: Shakos with white cap lines and red tuft. Dark green jackets and breeches; red collars, cuffs and stripes on breeches. Rank badges of varying designs including French officers' epaulettes. On campaign, grey breeches in lieu of green, in short black gaiters.

Scharf No.110: Field Officer in Spain, 1809-10 shows: Cap lines, edge to peak, shako plate, pompon and chin scales yellow, probably gold and gilt; 'raquettes' fall to the shoulder on the right side. Note plain green cuff flaps without edging. The single additional note points to the green being dark.



## Above:

Scharf No.114: Schwarzburg Rudolstadt Officer in Spain, 1809-10. The ends of the cap lines on the right side are looped up. Clearly in campaign dress, this officer has a cloak en banderole, a haversack and a Prussian-style canteen. The sabre has a brass scabbard, and is suspended on black slings. The notes mention light red facings; and a silver sword knot with a light blue stripe.







Bryan Fosten's reconstructions show (top) Scharf No.47: Lippe Pioneer in Spain, 1909-1810. In 1808 the Lippe-Detmold and Schaumburg-Lippe contingents, both serving in the 5th Rheinbund Regiment, were wearing white jackets with green collars, cuffs and turnbacks; with white lapels, shoulder straps and cuff flaps all piped green. Buttons were white metal. Until 1812 headdress was a black Corsican-style round hat turned up on the left, with a white loop and button, and either a red and yellow (Schaumburg) or red and white (Detmold) cockade. The Frankfurt figure shows the additional interesting distinctions of a Zimmermann or pioneer. The black-brown French-style bearskin has a red plaited cord and tassels. Since the cockade would no doubt have been worn on the left, there is no indication of which of the two contingents is depicted. The cap probably had a red top patch with a white embroidered grenade. The jacket has large French-style epaulettes, and cut-out crossed axes on the left arm. Note the carbine, the heavy sword (probably with a cock's-head pommel in French fashion), the axe, and the preferred tobacco pouch — which seems to have a clay pipe protruding from it.

(Bottom) Scharf No.10: Koburg Fusilier in Spain, 1809. The Sachsen-Koburg contingent formed part of the 4th Rheinbund Regiment. The dark green double-breasted jacket had bright yellow collar and cuffs, and green cuff flaps with three buttons and white lace loops. Buttons were white metal, and turnbacks red. It is unclear whether the service chevron on the left arm points up or down. For ceremonial occasions pale blue Hungarian-style pantaloons with yellow braid ornaments were worn, but for undress, white breeches — both with short black gaiters. The Frankfurt figure shows the jacket as described but in disarray; it is lined dark green. The unbuttoned waistcoat is white, the buttons white metal. The shako cover, and tobacco pouch tied to the sabre, are described as grey-brown, the overcoat roll brown. Note the gourd carried on a red strap. Sabre and bayonet scabbards are black with brass chapes. Note the bent bayonet and matching scabbard. The steel-mounted musket has a red-brown sling. The pouch flap is covered in white cloth or canvas, painted with the company identification '2 Cp'.

**Details (top):** Various items shown in sketches, often not identified beyond the note 'German soldier in Spain': Numbered pouch cover; knapsack variant; Koburg pouch ornament; steel canteen; Schwarzburg Rudolstadt shako with plate and lines, and with cover; sabre hilt. **(Bottom):** Knapsack with pan, axe and kindling; camp kettle; shako in fur cover; Koburg skirt ornament.

#### Right:

Scharf No.111: Schwarzburg Rudolstadt Private in Spain, 1809. The shako has yellow metal mounts, but white cap lines, as given by Knötel. The green coat has been carefully copied a second time, emphasising the edging to the cuff flaps and the odd epaulette shape. A hatchet is strapped beneath the folded overcoat. The notes confirm that the overcoat is dark grey-green, the equipment white, the musket garniture steel, and the sling white. Note dark green sabre knot, red pompon and green plume.

#### Far right:

Scharf No.112: Schwarzburg Rudolstadt Sergeant(?) in Spain, 1809. Here the shape of the cap plate is confirmed, but pompon and plume are red. Cf. jacket shape with No.111: in this case it is double-breasted, opening on the right side only. There is no clear indication of cuff flap piping, nor of the precise design of the red rank distinction. However, the bright blue tassel of the 'vaquette' and the tassel on the white sword knot indicate a special rank. The black equipment supports both a sabre-briquet and a bayonet.

#### Below:

Scharf No.115: Schwarzburg Rudolstadt Private in Spain. Identified in the notes, and by the black numeral on the beige shako cover, as a man of the 6th Rheinbund Regiment, he is dressed very similarly to the NCO, No.113. The notes point out that the trousers are dark brown, and that the footwear is odd, Spanish sandals being worn in most cases. There is a pale-toned gaiter on the left foot only.



#### Right:

Scharf No.113: Schwarzburg Rudolstadt NCO in Spain, 1809. This could be either a sergeant or a corporal. The notes refer to the roll on the knapsack, the shako cover and the trousers all being a uniform pale beige brown; and to the plain front of the jacket. The equipment and knapsack straps are black, as are the gaiters; the shoulder straps plain green; and the footwear light brown.







**Left:**  
 Knötel described the uniform of the Sachsen-Gotha-Altenburg infantry as: Cocked hat with white border and pompon ornament, and black cockade with yellow edge. Blue coat with red collar, cuffs and lapels; white smallclothes; short black gaiters. In 1809 the white smallclothes were replaced by blue pantaloons with red stripes. Grenadiers and light infantry had red and yellow headdress tufts respectively. Scharf's sketches show Sachsen-Gotha and Sachsen-Altenburg troops separately. All served in the 4th Rheinbund Regiment.

Scharf No.119: Sachsen-Gotha Grenadier in Spain, 1810-11. The coat is royal blue with red collar, lapels, turnbacks and cuffs, and royal blue cuff flaps. The blue trousers are loose, and stained up to the knees. Note the red plume attached to the sabre scabbard, and the ticken cover on the knapsack roll.



**Right:**  
 Scharf No.122: Sachsen-Altenburg Drummer in Spain, 1809. The notes show that there was in the lost sketchbook a second drawing of a drummer with a more elaborate hat and alternative drum hoop decoration, as shown in the details at right. This is a strangely old-fashioned uniform, and is curiously decorated with both French-style fringed epaulettes and white-barred red wings.

Gebäcktaug  
 weiß

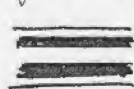


Hand  
 blau-grau  
 Wack  
 weiß



Rücken  
 braun  
 Hals

and so.



**Above:**  
 Scharf No.132: Sachsen-Altenburg Private in Spain, 1808(?). The date is queried. The cockade is black, edged yellow; the pompon and tuft red; the cap lines white; and the plate, apparently, the ducal arms in brass. The coat is as No.119 but the design and colour of the shoulder straps are more precisely defined. The blue pantaloons have clear red stripes. The notes also mention the blue-grey coat roll, white waistcoat and red-brown musket sling.

Götha - Altenburg<sup>136</sup>  
18 09 / 1810  
Grenadier  
in Spanien

**Right:**

Scharf No.136: Sachsen-Altenburg Grenadier in Spain, 1809-1810. Apparently wearing the habit-veste, with red cuff flaps, and red fringed epaulettes; the sabre knot is also red. There is a steel cooking pan on the knapsack.



**Below:**

Scharf No.135: Sachsen-Altenburg Private in Spain, 1811. The coat is the habit-veste, closed to the waist and with shorter skirts; it has red cuff flaps. The equipment is noted as being white leather, the coat roll dark blue.



**Left:**

Scharf No.134: Sachsen-Altenburg Private in Spain, 1809. Scharf notes that this was apparently the first uniform worn in Spain. The overcoat is described as grey, the leather equipment white, the hat border white, the cockade black with yellow edge, the coat and trousers dark blue, the buttons yellow metal, the waistcoat white and the gaiters black. The musket has brass mounts and a red-brown sling; the knapsack is apparently the brown calfskin French pattern.





# An Introduction to Medal Research



JAMES HAMMOND  
of Christie's

For too long medals have remained the interest of a small fraternity, with whom collectors of arms and militaria have had little common ground. Perhaps this has been due to the emphasis often placed upon a medal's purely numismatic worth: this has caused medals to be seen as having a disturbing association with coin collecting, and the medal's military significance became a secondary consideration. Even some collectors have devoted insufficient care to researching the recipients' history; and one reads horror stories of coin dealers putting Peninsula Medals on the scales, and selling them by weight for scrap ... A medal is as valuable as its recipient's career is fascinating; and most collectors are now well versed in researching the story behind the award. The aim of this article is to show beginners how that history may be established; how the information makes a piece more valuable; and what type of pitfalls may be expected along the way.

Obviously, in some cases, the story behind a medal may defy research because, with the passage of time, clerical error or inevitable wear and tear may have put the relevant documents beyond recovery. This happened to me recently, after I had obtained a Waterloo Medal for which I had waited all my collecting life: the one awarded to another James Hammond, who rode with the 18th Hussars when they completely dispersed the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, and cut down the gunners and drivers of the

French horse artillery who were in support. I do not think that this namesake of mine was any relation; but my disappointment was acute when I failed to find any discharge papers, pension records, or further history of the old *sabreur*. This disappointment must often be faced; but when papers are available for the man whose medal you own, some astonishing information may come to light.

## NAVAL RESEARCH

To start with the Royal Navy: it is fair to say that



anybody who has read his 'Hornblower' or his 'Jack Aubrey' will find that the truth of naval history far outshines the fiction. Medals and medallions have been struck to commemorate naval actions since Elizabeth I issued a reward for the Armada fight 400 years ago. There was no legislation to present all hands with a medal until 1848, when the retrospective Naval General Service Medal was issued. Nevertheless, the early medallions and unofficial medals commemorate some important actions; and they are extremely 'collectable' — as are the related commemorative pieces, which became very fashionable.

For the purposes of research, however, the first suitable medal is that given

## Left:

Waterloo Medal, named in upright capitals to JAMES HAMMOND, 18th HUSSARS. After the regiment's disbandment in 1821, Hammond's fate remains a mystery. (This, and all other photographs, are by Richard Miller of A.C. Cooper).

## Below:

The pinchbeck medallion for the capture of Fort Chagre by Admiral Vernon (1684-1757) in 1740. The admiral wears his habitual 'grog' coat, which entered naval legend once he insisted that seamen must take their rum mixed with water — 'grog'.

by Alexander Davison following the Battle of the Nile in 1798. Davison was Nelson's prize agent; he paid for the striking of a medal which every man in the fleet received, and many wore. It was given un-named, but many recipients had their name and ship engraved on the reverse.

The pair of Davison's medals illustrated here are engraved for recipients who served on the *Minotaur*, 74 guns, commanded by Capt. Thomas Louis. The similarity of engraving is immediately apparent; and from the quality and staining of the lettering, we may assume that it was engraved some time soon after its issue. Who are the men who had their names engraved? What rank did they hold

aboard the *Minotaur*? Where did they come from, and how old were they? Is the engraving genuine?

To begin to answer some of these questions, one must first obtain a reader's ticket from the Public Record Office at Kew Gardens, near Richmond in south-west London. This is simpler than one might imagine, though the PRO do require you to offer a reliable reference. Once the issue of the ticket is achieved, the original documents of Nelson's navy are available for you to read.

If the muster books signed by Nelson's captains, showing the names of every man and boy aboard their men-o'-war, do not set your heart pumping, then I suggest you read no further! Each naval muster book, some dating from as early as 1668, is available to you via a filing system of ship's names and dates. Once you establish the ship and date you wish to research — e.g. the *Minotaur* in 1798 — a file number is tapped into the computer, and the book is made available to you. (In practical terms the system is more complex than this; but the staff at Kew are very knowledgeable and willing to help.)

So now we have found, under file number ADM3614416, the required volume. The clear and elegant handwriting records the *Minotaur's* complement as 640 men and boys. This ship was victualled for sea and wages on 1 September 1796, and so by the time of the Battle of the Nile had been in commission for nearly two years. Every man's name, town of origin, rank and age at the start of the commission is given, but not in alphabetical or rank order.

At last Thomas Turner, aged 24, from Torquay, Devonshire, is confirmed aboard. We see his promotion, informing us that 'To the 1st April '97' he had been an Able Seaman, but now he appears as a '2 Gun' — presumably a Gunner's Mate. His shipmate Ebenezer Battisone also appears as a '2

Gun', and Christie's sold his engraved Davison's medal in November 1985. The jig-saw starts to fit. But what of Robert Lewis?

Lewis's name is nowhere to be found among the 640 names. Is he a pilot, going from ship to ship? Is he a supernumerary, i.e. one who is on board one ship although borne on the muster books of another? A search through the ADM36s for *Vanguard*, *Leander* and *Defence*, also ships of Nelson's Mediterranean fleet, shows no Robert Lewis, and the remaining 12



The Davison's medals for the Nile, 1798, engraved to Thos. Turner and Robt. Lewis of the *Minotaur*, 74.

ships will take even more time. So what next? Is Lewis using an alias on board, but wishing to have his real name engraved on his medal? Is the engraving genuine after all? Will his name be found at last on the books of another ship of the fleet?

Inevitably, research will raise as many questions as it will answer; and the engraved Davison's medal, for which there is no official roll of recipients, is often elusive. To compound these difficulties, the medal was issued in four different metals appropriate to the recipient's rank on board; and some seamen appear to have ex-

changed their bronze medals for gilt-bronze examples. Actual handling, reading, and familiarisation are most important to the collector. The engraved Davison's medal fortunately remains at the lower end of the price spectrum. Similar anomalies will be found if the collector graduates to the Naval General Service Medal, which also covers the Nile action — but here, errors of scholarship may prove rather more costly.

For instance, the NGS clasp for Trafalgar is obviously much sought-after, and consequently expensive. However, Nelson's

memorandum required two squadrons attacking in line; and this apparently irrelevant tactical plan must be borne in mind when purchasing the medal. A recipient from Nelson's windward squadron would be more desirable than one from Collingwood's leeward squadron (although, paradoxically, the *Royal Sovereign* distinguished herself as much as the *Victory*). Finding out that your medal was to a man on board the last ship of the leeward line may not guarantee your investment. In the case of a major fleet action it is essential to know how committed a ship was, what losses she suffered, who her captain was, and how his career progressed as a result of the battle. These circumstantial facts, along with the recipient's own history, all help to build a medal's story, and contribute to its worth. It is impossible to detail in this brief introduction every avenue of research which beckons, and every numismatic problem which may arise from delving into naval medal history; but the drama which may be conjured up, and the satisfaction which may be enjoyed, are truly immense.



## AN AFGHAN MYSTERY

To illustrate the type of difficulty which may arise from military campaign medals, I have chosen two men from the 59th Foot (2nd Bn., The Nottinghamshire Regiment) who fought in the Second Afghan War of 1878-80. Both medals commemorate the action at Ahmed Kel on 19 April 1880, when the 59th fought alongside the 2nd Sikhs and the 3rd Gurkhas.

In both instances the awards are confirmed by the medal roll microfilm under file number WO10052 at Kew. Each piece is named as expected, in slightly slanting engraved serif capital letters; and although one has a brigade number and the other does not, this is not incorrect. Unfortunately for the researcher, neither medal tells a straightforward tale.

To begin with 15B/304 Private T. Murphy: the medal microfilm mysteriously states that he 'died' — but does not say when, where or how. Again, it is to the muster roll of the 59th that we must now refer; and having tapped in the relevant file number WO161633, we confirm Private Murphy's death at Kandahar on 25 July 1879. Disease was at least as much of a threat to the Widow's redcoats as the slugs and blades of the incorrigible tribesmen who are still giving the Russian soldier such an eventful time; indeed, the 59th's muster roll shows that during August 1879 the regiment lost 24 men dead of cholera, typhoid and dysentery. What it does not explain is how Private Murphy qualified for the clasp 'Ahmed Khel' when he had apparently already been dead for nine months before the battle was fought.

This is clearly a case of clerical oversight. The medal roll microfilm gives no indication as to whom the

medal was forwarded to, and perhaps Murphy had no next-of-kin anyway. The medal had obviously been collected, because the clasp had been confirmed; and it seems unlikely that Murphy's real history had previously emerged.

Unfortunately, such a story does not make a medal more valuable — merely more amusing. The purist will regard it as an aberration, and value it less than he would the definitive no-clasp entitlement which it should be. The collector with a sense of humour will appreciate such a medal more, as he imagines a lethargic company clerk mis-ticking a ledger confirming awards. However, the lesson is obvious: even confirmation of a medal on the roll does not guarantee that its recipient was actually in the battle.

One man who almost certainly *was* in the action at Ahmed Kel, facing tribesmen who 'advanced with courage amounting to madness', was 1353 Private Enoch Kirby, 59th Foot. An account of the action by Capt. R. Elias of the same regiment describes the Afghani's utter disregard for the firepower of the massive .577 calibre Martini-Henry. Clearly, this is a medal one may be proud to own. But what of Enoch Kirby's subsequent career?

The medal roll states that Kirby's award was forwarded to his new regiment, the 90th Foot, to which he had transferred in October 1880. The muster books of the 2nd Bn., The Camerons, substantiate this; and show Kirby's advancement to lance-corporal in April 1882 and to full corporal in March 1883. So far so good: but all of a sudden Kirby returns to England in May 1884 — and disappears. There is no record of his discharge papers in the WO97 file; and here his story ends, in puzzling silence.

By no means all veterans ended their careers in obscurity or with wrong medal entitlements. When their documents are available a host of details regarding their service, behaviour and medical history enable the assembly of a very complete picture of a fighting man of a bygone age. Sometimes their date of death is also given, allowing more detective work among the records of births, marriages and deaths at St. Katherine's House in the Aldwych, London. Every medal has a story to unfold, and the tools to achieve this are readily available; but as with most skills, one's eye and grip improve with practice. **M**

### Suggested sources:

Among many more sources which I would like to have acknowledged, the following books and magazines are compulsory reading and reference for anyone contemplating further study of campaign medals:

### General reference:

*Coin and Medal News*, published monthly

*British Battles and Medals*, Maj. L.L. Gordon (Spinks, London, 1979)

*Records of Officers and Soldiers who have served in the British Army* (Public Record Office)

### Royal Navy:

*Naval Records for Genealogists*, N.A.M. Rodger (Public Record Office, 1984)

*The Wooden World*, N.A.M. Rodger (Collins, 1986)

*The Naval History of Great Britain*, William James (London, 1837)

*Naval Biographical Dictionary*, O'Byrne (1848)

*The Naval General Service Roll*, compiled by Capt. K. Douglas-Morris, RN

*The Nelson Touch*, anthology compiled by Clemence Dane (Heinemann, 1942)

### The Peninsula, Waterloo and Crimea Eras:

*The Waterloo Roll Call*, Charles Dalton (Arms & Armour Press in assoc. with J.B. Hayward, 1971)

*Your Most Obedient Servant*, James Thornton (Webb & Bower, 1985)

*Wellington. The Years of the Sword*, Elizabeth Longford (Tinling, 1969)

*The Battle of Waterloo*, George James (London 1917)

*Honour the Light Brigade*, Can. W.M. Lummus, MC (J.B. Hayward, 1973)

### The 2nd Afghan War:

*The Casualty Roll*, compiled by Anthony Farrington (London Stamp Exchange, 1986). This includes an excellent bibliography of the campaign, and the most important selected despatches.



The Afghan Medals, with AHMED KHEL clasps, awarded to Privates T. Murphy and Enoch Kirby of the 59th Foot.

**'Rough Sketches in the Life of an Old Soldier' by Lt.Col. J. Leach, CB; facsimile reprint of 1831 edn.; Ken Trotman Ltd., Cambridge; 411pp.; £25.00**

The 95th Rifles produced a clutch of memorable first-hand accounts of the Napoleonic Wars. The author of this work wrote two: *Rambles on the Banks of the Styx* (London, 1847); and this first volume, now re-issued in facsimile by Ken Trotman Ltd., whose reprint programme has made available a number of the classic accounts of the Napoleonic Wars.

This latest volume contains much of interest, for unlike many memoirs it was written with the benefit of the author's daily journal, reducing to a minimum the fallibility of memory. Leach chronicles the activities of the Light Division during the Peninsular War; and states with some pride that 'I never, for one hour in my whole life, held a staff appointment, but always did duty with my regiment!'

The early part of his career was spent with the 70th Foot in the fever-ridden West Indies, where disease and the climate decimated (and worse) the European garrison. Leach himself contracted such a fever, but cured himself by drinking a jug of boiling Madeira — 'a kill or cure business, and worthy only of a wild youth' — but it spared him to write his poignant last sentence of *Rough Sketches*: 'All the friends of my early life are entombed in Antigua'.

Joining the élite 95th, Leach served in the Danish expedition — lamenting hostilities against this nation — and thereafter in the Peninsula, from Roleia (where he was injured when a friend's canteen was hit by a shot and thrown against his mouth) to Toulouse. 'An egoist being a character for which I never had a predilection', his own exploits are more sparsely chronicled than those of some other Peninsular memorialists, which is regrettable; but even so there is much fascinating material in *Rough Sketches*.

We learn 'how to dress pork in the most expeditious manner'; and of his respect for the French but not for his allies ('... the Spanish armies, if they had any bodies deserving that name ...'); and those who believed the Portuguese equal to the British and French troops and 'advanced such doctrines, must have been well aware of their absurdity ...'). There are his wonderful descriptions of the Brunswick Oels Jägers ('They deserted to the French in such numbers, that we had a *lease* of them but for a few weeks'); and his tongue-in-cheek remark on the newly-arrived Household Cavalry, 'fair and beautiful as lilies, when contrasted with the sunburnt visages and battered appointments of the cavalry regiments which had been many years in the country'.

Here is the character of the Peninsular War, chivalry between French and British ('carrying on the war as it should be') contrasting with the revolting cruelty of the guerrilla war. Here too are authentic glimpses of campaign life, such as

his praise of the cigar, 'without which there was no getting on ... the warmth and comfort which it imparts is incredible'; or the search for acorns on the retreat from Burgos, there being nothing else to eat. The book ends with Waterloo and its aftermath, and a plea for 'fair play' in giving credit to the English and Irish as well as the Scots who, says Leach, according to public opinion, won the battle unaided; in the panorama at Edinburgh, for example, the Scots are depicted as giants, 'whilst the other poor dear harmless little regiments ... were represented as mere pigmies'.

Even by today's standards, a book is not cheap at £25; but as an edition limited to 300 numbered copies, attractively bound and well produced, it is worth a place in the library of any Napoleonic enthusiast, and Ken Trotman Ltd. are to be complimented in making available a book which is, in its original edition, very rare indeed. **PJH**

**'The Campaign of Waterloo' by the Hon. Sir John Fortescue; Greenhill Books; 230pp.; maps; £16.50**

This fifth volume in Greenhill Books' 'Napoleonic Library' series of reprints is slightly different from the earlier issues, in that it appears in this form for the first time. It is, in fact, a section from Vol. X of Fortescue's monumental *History of the British Army*, first published in 1920. It is thus extremely valuable in making available a typical section of Fortescue's famous work, the fact of its being extracted from a larger study accounting for the somewhat abrupt beginning.

Although 67 years have elapsed since first publication, Fortescue's work has not dated a great deal, as many of the principal sources he quotes remain standard references (for example, Houssaye). Exceptionally readable and a model of clarity, Fortescue's history of the final campaign of the Napoleonic Wars is still most valuable and, in as much as it concerns largely the tactics and strategy of the campaign with a minimum of eyewitness accounts or 'padding', is still one of the clearest and most easily understood accounts of what happened and why.

An additional bonus is Fortescue's robust and unequivocal style, of a type rarely encountered in modern books. To give random examples: regarding the King of the Netherlands, who 'may well have thought that a crown adds an augmentation to the brain as well as an adornment to the brow', whose people 'professed to mourn over the freedom of which Napoleon had bereft them; but it was only when they thought of their lost commerce that they wailed loudly and from their hearts', and whose son the Prince of Orange 'can be described only as a meddlesome and mischievous en-

## REVIEWS

cumbrance'. Of Napoleon, to whom 'Good faith upon principle and not for personal advantage, was a matter that lay beyond his horizon: he had always lied to his generals in Spain and they had always lied to him'. Gneisenau receives the greatest criticism: 'Unaware of his defects, or at any rate unwilling to admit them, he conceived himself to be undervalued, and vented his spleen in querulousness, jealousy and suspicion'. 'No intellectual eminence can exalt a nature so essentially low as this, a nature which, from sheer terror of that which is high, abases all others to its own vile and despicable level'. (Here alone Fortescue is probably overstating the case; though accusations of immoderate chauvinism are largely rebutted by his praise of Blücher, of the Netherlands generals who saved Quatre Bras, by his criticism of those elements of the British force which deserved it — even of Wellington — and by his generous excuses for the bad behaviour of certain units, such as the raw and unenthusiastic Netherlands conscripts).

Fortescue is equally forthright about some 'sources', such as Pollio's work: 'It is well when quitting the domain of conjecture at least not to exchange it for that of fiction, not to say falsehood ... and one conversant with the history of the Peninsular War (which no foreigner is, and General Pollio very manifestly is not) ...'; and 'Such incidents as these prove that the contemporary narratives of Belgian misbehaviour at Waterloo are absolutely true, and they are not to be refuted by specious apologies proffered after the convenient lapse of a century'. Yet time and again Fortescue gives credit where due: 'Never did British soldiers bear themselves better, and never were they matched against nobler foes ... Never did the French soldier cover himself with greater glory than at Waterloo, his persistent gallantry in attack being beyond all praise ...'

It is also most interesting to have Fortescue's opinions on the Opposition in the British parliament, whose influence on the campaign is rarely considered: 'hungry for office after twenty years of exclusion, strongly possessed by the false beliefs which they had been proclaiming for years, and practically committed to a reversal of the Government's policy, not because it was wrong but because it was the Government's' is a judgement which will seem all too comprehensible to modern readers.

One of the great features of the original editions of Fortescue's history is the provision of fine maps in colour; reproduction of these was apparently not feasible for this edition, and the maps provided (from T.A. Dodge's *Napoleon*, 1907) are pale imitations and of only limited use; but it might be argued

that so plentiful are better maps of Waterloo that to provide anything more than sketch-maps would have been superfluous. They are adequate to follow the main points of Fortescue's account, but the reader should seek larger-scale maps for further study.

The book ends with a masterly summary of the campaign, which like the whole benefits from Fortescue's research: 'The original document lies before me as I write ... firmly written but containing one grammatical error' (Napoleon's letter of surrender). Despite his occasional lapses (for example, identifying the Cumberland Hussars, a Hanoverian corps, as Netherlands), and his rather too fierce criticism of Gneisenau (written in the aftermath of World War I, it should be remembered), the account remains required reading for anyone interested in Waterloo, and at £16.50 is excellent value, given the scarcity of the original work. **PJH**

**'Narrow Gauge at War' by Keith Taylorson; Plateway Press; 56pp; 45 b/w illus. plus map; appendices, biblio; p/bk £5.25**

This slim volume sets out to present the reader with a picture of one of the more vital, but surprisingly little-known aspects of the Great War: the part played by narrow gauge military railways and more particularly, those employed by the British Army on the Western Front. The groundwork of this subject was very ably laid by W.J.K. Davies in *Light Railways of the First World War*, published some 20 years ago and long out of print. This, and other references cited in Mr. Taylorson's bibliography can be found through libraries, but none could be called 'generally available'; and herein lies the difficulty of re-tackling this subject.

It should be said straight away that this book succeeds in its purpose very well, albeit suffering from being caught between two stools. For the majority of potential readers the content will almost certainly be completely new; for the minority who have maintained a long-term interest in the subject, much of it will be familiar. It would be churlish to blame Mr. Taylorson for choosing an approach with the widest appeal: given the circumstances, he could have done no other.

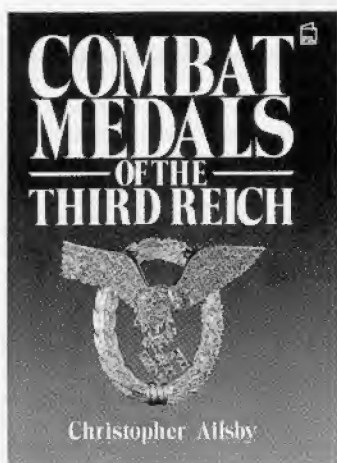
Of the photographs, 25 are from IWM archives and the balance are from private collections. The former occupy a full half-page each, with extended captions. The others are interspersed throughout a commendably concise text, covering the general development of military light railways and their invaluable contribution to the war. There are three appendices, fully covering War Department locomotive rosters by type, preserved examples by type and location, and an excerpt from a 1919 edition of *Surplus* detailing ex-WD equipment for sale. Although much of Appendix 1 has



already appeared in print, the author's colleague Andrew Neale is to be congratulated for his efforts in expanding the available data to include, where known, post-war loco histories and — not previously available — fairly definite 'ex-works' dates. A few of the captions and passages of the text contain errors and ambiguities, mostly carried on uncritically from previous books; but these are minor, and in no way detract from this book's value.

In summary, highly recommended. For the newcomer this work will provide insight into a much-neglected area of military and railway history; for the converted, at the very least, the chance to obtain 45 photos for a mere £5.25 is not to be missed.

KPD



**'Combat Medals of the Third Reich' by Christopher Ailsby; Patrick Stephens Ltd.; h/bk; 256pp; 220 b/w illus.; 16pp colour illus.; £12.95**

This book is divided into eight main sections: the Spanish Civil War, Second World War Decorations, Cuffbands, Arm Shields, Naval War Badges, Army and Waffen-SS War Badges, Luftwaffe War Badges, and Ribbon Awards. Each section covers very thoroughly all the recorded medals, awards, decorations, badges, and insignia which were instituted, as well as a number of citations and presentation cases, and a number of items which have not previously been recorded. The individual items — 218, plus seven variants — are too numerous to list here, but will be a delight to readers of this book. The text accompanying each is interesting and informative (if at times the prose is tinged slightly purple!)

As with most books, there are errors to be found, though the odd spelling mistake or slightly ambiguous passage should really be charged to the editor rather than the author. However, the only serious criticism applies to the photographs, both half-tone and colour. These show a lack of consistency: many are excellent and apparently professionally taken, others are distinctly less competent. The 16 pages of colour, each with an average of five items, are not well laid out, and the cropping is too tight in some cases. This in no way affects the value of the information given, but it does detract from the appearance of the book.

It is interesting to note that the author describes this as an 'introduction' to the subject — though it clearly offers considerable depth of coverage in its own right — and mentions his ambition to produce further volumes on political and civil awards, particularly Gau badges and citations, awards to foreign volunteer units and Nazi organisations, satellite and puppet states; and intends to compile a volume listing all known types of Third Reich medals, decorations and awards, including miniature medals — a subject not yet covered in any book known to this reviewer. Ailsby also intends to produce books on reproduction and fake medals and

badges. While waiting for these valuable and intriguing volumes to appear, I predict that 'Combat Medals' will become a very popular book and one which will take its place on the shelves of most dedicated collectors and enthusiasts.

BLD

**'A Hawk at War: The Peninsular Reminiscences of General Sir Thomas Brotherton, CB'; ed. Bryan Perrett; Picton Publishing (Chippenham); 84pp.; illus.; h/bk, £11.95**

Thomas Brotherton served in the Peninsular War with the 14th Light Dragoons. He was a redoubtable character: the officer who helped rescue Norman Ramsey's guns at Fuentes de Oñoro, he was frequently distinguished on outpost duty, and a measure of the man is the fact that he fought at Salamanca nine days after being twice run through the body during a cavalry skirmish. He was so ill that his colonel threatened to arrest him if he refused to quit the regiment — so he went away and fought as a volunteer with the 6th Division instead!

The reminiscences of this sterling character are most welcome, and attractively presented in this new volume. It is not a formal autobiography, but a succession of anecdotes with linking paragraphs by the modern editor; but we are not told the story of the original MS, nor if it is part of Brotherton's writings which were used in the compilation of the history of the 14th Hussars published in 1901. Nevertheless, Brotherton had an eye for a story, and an entertaining tale results: no respecter of reputation, he never hides his opinions.

Whilst with La Romana's Spaniards, he notes 'our daily operations consisted only in running away'; Don Julian Sanchez is described as 'that humbug'; farriers are condemned as irredeemable rogues; and Judge-Advocate Larpent's memoirs are 'perfectly absurd, except where his stomach was concerned, and he is then most in earnest'! (It would have been of greater value had the editor identified Larpent, a well-known Peninsular memorialist, Brotherton naming him only as 'Mr. L.'). Many of Brotherton's anecdotes are of interest; for example, Cureton (later hero of the Sikh Wars) was a 'gentleman-ranker' in his troop under a pseudonym, having faked his death while an officer to escape his creditors.

Brotherton mentions on several occasions the civility which existed between British and French officers (one enemy even 'talking cheerfully and politely' to him whilst engaged in a sabre-duel to the death); 'often have we drank a glass of wine together after the day's fight was over'. By a similar token, Brotherton abhorred any unnecessary violence, condemning without reservation those who took shots at the enemy on any other occasion than a general engagement. He makes a wonderful comment that had Wellington practised the theatrical

declamations which Napoleon used to animate his troops, 'our soldiers, instead of being moved by such trash, would have called out "Fudge!"'. They want no "blarney" to make them fight ...'

There are a number of slips in the editorial matter, which will be apparent to Peninsular scholars. We are told that Brotherton served in the 'Scots Fusilier Guards' from 1803-07, yet that title existed only between 1831 and 1871. It is postulated that one of Brotherton's adversaries in combat was 'one of Napoleon's Horse Grenadiers' because he wore a fur cap and dragoon uniform, whereas it should be obvious that the man simply belonged to an élite company of a line dragoon regiment, hence the fur cap. It is stated that in September 1811 the 14th Light Dragoons 'defeated the enemy's Polish Lancers at Espeja', repeating the erroneous belief that a lancer must by definition be a Pole. This was a common error at the time, but even in 1811 it was realised immediately that the troops involved were the *Lanciers de Berg*, not Poles at all. (Wellington's *Dispatches*, VIII pp.300-01; Oman IV p.564.)

The illustrations include a wonderful photograph of Brotherton in later life, and a contemporary portrait of Felton Hervey of the 14th; but unfortunately the remainder are non-contemporary (including rather inaccurate cartoons of incidents described by Brotherton), most depicting the 1812-pattern uniform which Brotherton makes clear he never wore in the Peninsula (though the regiment did from 1813, Lovell Badcock describing it as 'rascally new dress' — JSAHR XXXIV p.77).

£11.95 for a slim volume might be regarded as expensive; but any new Peninsular memoir is required reading for the Napoleonic enthusiast, and Brotherton's anecdotes are so good — 'the authentic voice of the Peninsula', as the editor states with justification — that even at this price it is thoroughly recommended.

PJH

**'AMilitaria No. 2', ed. Christian Tavernier; available from New Fashion Media SA, 60 avenue Louise, B-1050 Bruxelles, Belgium; 56pp. illus. throughout, of which 20pp. col. illus.; p/bk; prices inc. P&P, UK £3.00, USA \$6.00**

We reviewed the first of this admirable magazine-format publication in 'MF' No.8, and are delighted that it is to become a regular journal. The texts are in French, but the illustrations need no translating, and are generally of high interest. Contents of No.2 include articles on British and US mine detectors of WWII; Wehrmacht cuff-titles; WWII Polish paratroop brevets; ersatz Mauser bayonets, 1915-18; Yugoslav partisan insignia, 1941-45; MG34 and MG42 accessory equipment, 1939-45; stone unit monuments of the Maginot Line; and the 'Free Indian Legion' of World War II.

# An ARVN Paratroop Uniform, 1965-66

MARTIN WINDROW

Painting by KEVIN LYLES

Through the kindness of a London militaria collector and dealer, Peter Christopher of Kensington Market, we have recently had the opportunity to examine and photograph an interesting camouflage uniform. This is identified by its several insignia, and by an accompanying magazine article, as that of a captain — *Dai Uy* — of the Airborne Division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, probably dating from 1965-66.

## The Uniform

The uniform consists of a shirt and trousers of light-weight material, camouflage-printed inside and out. The shirt has two shoulder straps with green plastic buttons; a fly front concealing six similar buttons; and a button on each plain cuff, with two alternative buttonholes for tightening. There are two patch breast pockets with straight flaps, the latter fastening by central buttons which engage with a smaller, concealed inner flap. There are air vents in the side seam under each armpit; and doubled reinforcement patches on each shoulder, and each elbow.

The trousers have a buttoned fly and an inner fly flap buttoning left to right. The narrow waistband is fitted with cloth belt loops. There are two side pockets of vertical 'slash' type; two rear hip pockets each with a central button fastening through a flap which slants from front to rear; and two large 'cargo' pockets on the outsides of the thighs. These are closed by two buttons placed unevenly, through a flap slanting from front to rear; and have a small inner patch pocket with a central button-through fastening. The cargo pockets are of so-called 'chicken' type<sup>(1)</sup>, with a bellows gusset at the rear vertical edge only; the two pleats on the face are also 'one way' only. Tightening tapes emerge from a slit in the rear gusset of these

pockets. (For all these features, see the accompanying schematic drawing.)

The camouflage pattern is extremely complex, with much over-printing producing an effect of four different greens and at least two and possibly three different browns: see colour photographs on pp.40-41, and front cover. The inside surface of the shirt appears slightly paler than the outside in all tones. The only marking of any kind on the uniform is a faded example of the usual ARVN Quartermaster Directorate 'box' stencilled in black inside the rear neck of the shirt, apparently enclosing the usual 'TTSKQT' legend but generally illegible.

Accompanying the shirt and trousers is a maroon cloth beret with a black leather rim, and hanging

tightening ribbons at centre rear; the lining is grey in the headband and black in the crown. The beret bears, on a maroon cloth patch, the embroidered gold and silver (bullion), yellow and red insignia of the Republic of Vietnam Airborne Forces.

## Insignia

On the left shoulder of the shirt is the cloth insignia of the ARVN Airborne Division, worn from December 1965. On the left breast pocket is the so-called 'jump status designator' marking service with an active airborne unit. Above the right breast pocket is the ARVN parachutist's qualification 'wings' insignia, on a black ground. Attached to the left chest, between the closure of the shirt and the upper pocket edge, is a strip of olive drab cloth bearing the three embroidered golden-yellow plum blossoms of captain's rank.

## ORIGINS AND ORGANISATION

The division which fought alongside the American forces in the Republic of Vietnam could trace its origins back to the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The French Expeditionary Corps began training locally recruited volunteers for airborne operations from 1948; on 1 January that year the 1<sup>ere</sup>

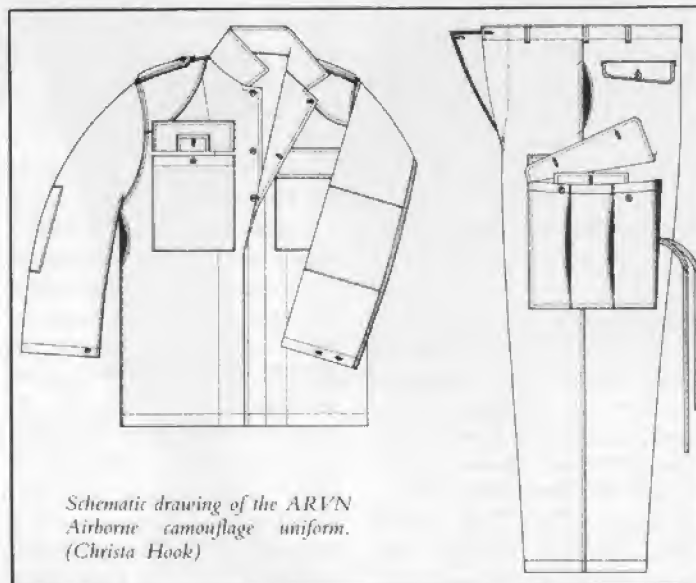
Compagnie Indochinoise Parachutiste was formed. Three or four other CIPs were raised subsequently, as well as the '1st Parachute Guard Company, North Vietnam' (1<sup>ere</sup> CPGNV) in 1949. Generally the CIPs were attached to French parachute battalions during the French units' tour of duty in Indochina.

The major expansion of the Vietnamese parachute arm came in 1951. The French disaster on Route Coloniale 4 immediately south of the Tonkinese border with China in September-November 1950 brought Gen. Jean de Lattre de Tassigny out to Saigon in December, with sweeping powers.

Given his weakness in mobile manpower, De Lattre placed heavy emphasis on the raising and training of capable Vietnamese National Army units. Locally recruited companies and battalions were incorporated into French battalions and regiments for 'on the job training' on active service. Many of these were subsequently transferred into wholly Vietnamese units. While under direct French command these units had almost entirely French officers and senior NCOs, though the training of Vietnamese officers was urgently put in hand.

## The 'bawouans'

The French airborne reserve, badly mauled in the RC4 battles, was reorganised. Battalions included those designated 'Chasseurs Parachutistes', which were units of the Metropolitan army; 'Commandos Coloniaux de Parachutistes' (from March 1951, 'Parachutistes Coloniaux'); and the 'Bataillons Etrangers de Parachutistes' of the Foreign Legion. Under De Lattre the unit organisation was standardised at an HQ company and four rifle companies for all types of battalion. The incorporation of Vietnamese



Schematic drawing of the ARVN Airborne camouflage uniform. (Christa Hook)

<sup>(1)</sup>See 'MI' No.6 p.24, 'Tigerstripe Camouflage of the Vietnam War'.





Close-up of the shirt, insignia and beret of the ARVN Airborne captain's uniform; see text for details. Note that for the purposes of this photograph only the 5th Bn. patch has been added.

was now to proceed until between 30% and 50% of each para battalion were locally recruited.

Apart from the local element within the French and Foreign Legion battalions — one company in each Metropolitan and Legion battalion, two in each Colonial battalion — De Lattre presided over the formation of complete Vietnamese parachute battalions with French command cadres. These BPVNs — 'Bataillons

de Parachutistes Vietnamiens' — were known in French Army slang as 'hawouans'.

On 15 July 1951 the 1<sup>er</sup>BPVN was formed at Saigon from the old 1<sup>er</sup>CIP and the CPGNV, the former being combat veterans who had served with the 1<sup>er</sup>BCCP. The 'premier hawouan' saw a good deal of hard fighting over the next three years. They made a number of combat jumps, notably at Notre Dame Rock during the Black River battles of December 1951 – January 1952. They fought with Mobile Groups and amphibious forces; and in the

garrison of Na San in November–December 1952. Two citations earned them the *fourragère* of the Croix de Guerre TOE in January 1954.

The 3<sup>e</sup>BPVN was formed on 1 September 1952 around a cadre from the 10<sup>e</sup>BPCP when the French personnel were repatriated at the end of their tour. The same method was used to form the 5<sup>e</sup>BPVN from a 3<sup>e</sup>BPC cadre in September 1953; the 7<sup>e</sup> was formed two months later, and the 6<sup>e</sup> — the first of these units to be entirely Vietnamese-officered — on 1 March 1954. The 5<sup>e</sup>BPVN was annihilated at Dien Bien

Phu in spring 1954, but was rebuilt that summer.

### Army of the Republic of Vietnam

With the departure of the French the remaining Vietnamese airborne units moved south to form the ARVN Airborne Group, based at Tan Son Nhut, Saigon, under the command of Maj. Do Cao Tri. As on 1 May 1955 the Airborne Group comprised:

Combat Support Bn. (HQ; Abn. Eng. Co.; Mortar Co.; Abn. Basic Technical Co.; Communications Section; Air Support Delivery Section.)

Airborne Rifle Bns.: 1st, 3rd,



Kevin Lyles's reconstruction is based on an interesting photo-feature in the 8 April 1966 number of LIFE Magazine, which includes a photo of the award of his second Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm to Capt. Peter Dawkins, US Army, at that time serving as an advisor with an unidentified battalion of the ARVN Airborne Division. Dawkins (who recently retired in the rank of brigadier-general) is shown as depicted here. In addition to the insignia described elsewhere, he wears black thread US captain's bars, and crossed Infantry rifles with unit numbers, on his right and left collar points respectively; black thread US Combat Infantryman's Badge and Parachutist's Badge on his left breast, and a name tape. The fourragère, exactly following the French style but in the red-flecked yellow of the Cross of Gallantry ribbon, was a collective award to the unit rather than the individual. We have not been able to establish which battalions were entitled to this distinction, but believe that most, particularly of the lower-numbered battalions were so honoured.



The cap badge (top centre) was photographed in use by 1<sup>st</sup> BPVN in March 1952; but later photographs of this and other battalions in 1953-54 seem to indicate use of the standard French airborne cap badge by some or all units. The metal battalion insignia

are (clockwise from cap badge) 7<sup>e</sup>, 5<sup>e</sup>, 3<sup>e</sup>, and 1<sup>re</sup> BPVN's. Such insignia were still to be seen in the 1960s, worn pinned or fobbed to the right pocket as an alternative to the coloured cloth company/battalion patches. (Militaria Magazine)



#### Above:

A direct comparison shows that although the ARVN Airborne camouflage material (right) is quite different in pattern to the old 1943 British 'windproof' material (left), there is enough general similarity to allow a tentative link. Large

quantities of the British material were issued to French airborne battalions in Vietnam in the 1950s, and given the continuity between 'French' and 'American' periods it seems logical that it was used as a model when the local uniform was designed.



Battalion insignia were never, apparently, worn in the field, although the divisional patch, jump status designator and 'para-wings' were commonly seen on combat uniform. Battalion insignia were worn on the camouflage uniform for some parade occasions, and perhaps for walking-out. The design of these cloth insignia closely followed that of the metal pocket job badges worn by the French-raised *bawouans* of the same battalion numbers; but the colour of the ground varied by company. This 5th Airborne Infantry Battalion patch is on an azure blue ground edged white. The white bird has golden yellow detailing; the parachute and sword are white with blue detailing, blue letters 'TDND' (Tieu Doan Nhay Du, 'airborne battalion') and red '5'; the disc is red, outlined yellow.

Company numbering was, e.g. in the 5th Bn., HQ Co. — 50th; Rifle Cos. — 51st, 52nd, 53rd Cos.; Combat Support Co. — 54th; this sequence was the same for all battalions. In most battalions the company backgrounds were green, purple, azure blue, orange (or yellow) and red respectively. The 7th Bn. used green, powder blue, azure, orange, and red; the 11th Bn., green, purple, azure, yellow, and red and maroon for the 114th Co. The Support Bn. used red (HQ & General Service Co.), purple (Technical Services Co.), yellow (Maintenance Co.), green (Transportation Co.), blue (Supply Co.) and orange (Finance Co.)

5th, 6th (the 7th Bn. had been disbanded on 1 March 1955).

The Group was redesignated as the Airborne Brigade in 1959. At the period from which our subject uniform seems to date, 1965-66, the formation was designated ARVN Airborne Division (from 1 December 1965). Still based on Tan Son Nhut, the division now comprised three brigades as follows (dates of activation of the 2nd, 7th, 8th, 9th and 11th Airborne Bns. and the various supporting units are not immediately available):

#### 1st Brigade

1st, 8th, 9th Abn. Bns.; 1st Abn. Arty. Bn.; 1st Abn. Recon. Co.

#### 2nd Brigade

5th, 7th, 11th Abn. Bns.; 2nd Abn. Arty. Bn.; 2nd Abn. Recon. Co.

#### 3rd Brigade

2nd, 3rd, 6th Abn. Bns.; 3rd Abn. Arty. Bn.; 3rd Abn. Recon. Co.

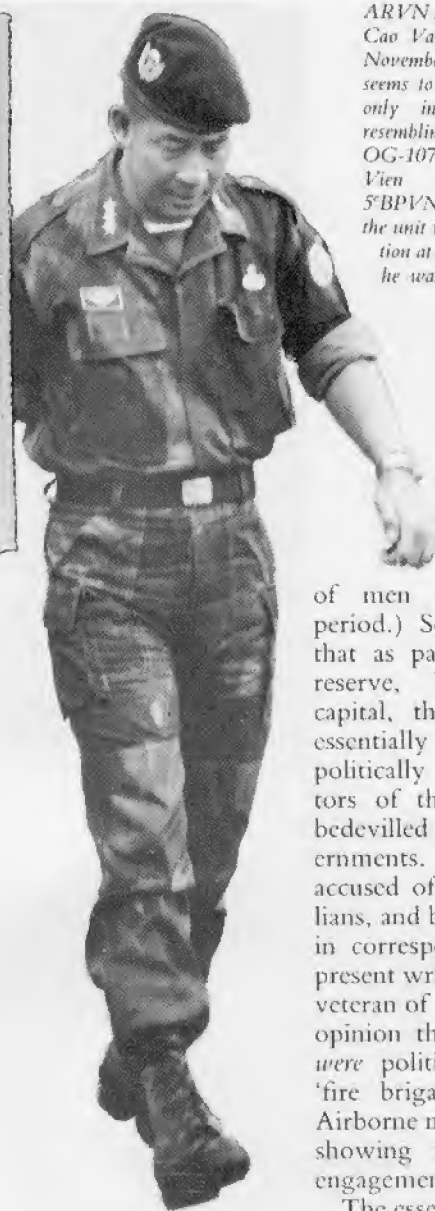


Divisional troops comprised airborne support, signal and medical battalions and an airborne engineer company.

### OPERATIONS

Before the arrival of major US ground elements in Vietnam the Airborne formation had already seen a good deal of action, including combat jumps at Bo Tue (5 March 1962), north of Saigon (14 July 1962), and at Ap Bac (2 January 1963). In 1965 further jumps were made: at Duc Co in Pleiku Province on 3 August, to help relieve a hard-pressed US Special Forces camp; and in an attack on a Viet Cong concentration at An Khe in November. In 1966 further raids against enemy concentrations were made at Son Cau in Phu Yen Province on 3 March, and in Chuong Thien Province on 27 December.

In November 1965 the ARVN Airborne successfully relieved a US Special Forces camp at Dong Xoai, north-west of Saigon, which was in danger of being overrun. Between November 1966 and December 1967 the 3rd and 5th Abn. Bns. took part in Operation 'Fairfax', a long-term effort to increase security and train ARVN and RF/PF elements in Gia Dinh Province east and south of Saigon. The 9th Abn. Bn. distinguished itself in the defence of Quang Tri during the 1968 Tet offensive; and, together with the 3rd and 7th Bns., subse-



ARVN Lt. Gen. (Trung Tuong) Cao Van Vien at Bien Hoa in November 1965. His uniform seems to differ from our example only in having side pockets resembling those of US Army OG-107s. As a captain, Van Vien commanded 3<sup>rd</sup> Cie., 5<sup>th</sup> BPVN in August 1954 when the unit was rebuilt after annihilation at Dien Bien Phu; in 1965 he was chief of the ARVN Joint Chiefs of Staff.

of men over a ten-year period.) Some critics claim that as part of the general reserve, based near the capital, the Airborne were essentially 'coup troops' — politically active manipulators of the factions which bedevilled Vietnamese governments. They are also accused of brutality to civilians, and battle-shyness. But in correspondence with the present writer a US Airborne veteran of Vietnam states the opinion that although there were political episodes, the 'fire brigade' units of the Airborne made an impressive showing in many serious engagements.

The essential quality of the division may perhaps be judged by their behaviour when left to face the brunt of the NVA offensives without US support in the 1970s. The Airborne Division were in the thick of the fighting in 1972-75, and seem to have handled themselves with stubborn courage under increasingly hopeless conditions. **M**

#### Sources & acknowledgements:

In preparing this article I have leaned very heavily on the work of Cecil B. Smyth Jr., whose *Insignia of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Pts. I, III & IV* is available from him at 6224 Stevens Forest, Columbia, Md. 21045, USA. Information on the early French-raised units is from *Histoire des Parachutistes Français* by Paul Gaujac, published by Editions de l'Albatros (SPL), Paris, 1975. I am also most grateful to Gordon L. Rottman, M. Albert Mendez, Denis Lassus, Robert C. Mikesch, and of course to Peter Christopher.

Spanish preferred the brim flat all round). 52 Cdo. is known to have worn a locally-made shoulder title 'M.E. COMMANDO' in yellow or white on black — see item Q, p.13. No information on red-on-blue titles is available.

51 Middle East Commando had a different origin. H.J. Cator, who had pre-war experience with Palestinian pioneers, was invited to form an Arab/Jewish commando; and in October 1940 was named commandant of this unit. It did not join 'Layforce', but served in Eritrea and Abyssinia. Local military dress was worn with the solar topee, but information on any distinctions is lacking.

holding unit centre. In December 1941 it became the Commando Depot, and later the Commando Training Centre. After Dieppe, in August 1942, individual troops were trained at Achnacarry. Shoulder titles known include 'COMMANDO' over 'D' (for depot) in white on black, or light blue and light red on black; and 'COMMANDO D' in red on blue.

The HQ of the Special Service Brigade, 1940-41, had a distinctive sleeve sign of daggers in silver and red on a black ground: see item G, p.12. The Brigade Signals also had a distinctive sign, illustrated here as item O, p.13, which is believed to have been retained into 1943; later a title 'COMMANDO SIGNALS' was worn in red on blue. **MI**



There is no evidence that formation of 53 and 54 Cdos. was even begun, although there had been suggestions that up to five Commandos might be raised in the Middle East.

#### Other insignia

As well as individual Commando distinctions, there existed signs for higher formations and other establishments.

In mid-summer 1940 the Special Training Centre was established at Loch Ailort, Inverness-shire, under Lt. Col. B. Mayfield, for the benefit of the Independent Companies. It was closed in February 1942. A special embroidered sleeve sign bore a yellow eagle on a quartered black and white shield all on a black ground — see item F, p.12.

Achnacarry, also in Inverness-shire, housed No. 1 Independent Company in 1940, and later became a

#### Above:

(Top) White-on-black 9 Cdo. title variant. Supposedly superseded by the regulation red-on-blue type (printed example, centre), a cut-down '9 Commando' variant of this white-on-black title was certainly still being worn in Italy in December 1943, and perhaps later. (Bottom) Printed red-on-blue 'F.F. Commando' title variant, for 'Free French', but not confirmed by photographic evidence as having been worn.

#### Acknowledgements

To collect the information presented in these articles has been a task calling for concentration; ascertaining the truth where memories have failed takes time, and the existence of replica cloth insignia on the market is a complicating factor. I hope that what I have written will not be too misleading. My most sincere thanks are due to all who have helped me, including: Brig. Peter Young, DSO\*\*, MC\*\*, who has kept in touch with me since he first joined 3 Cdo.; Henry Brown, Secretary of the Commando Assoc.; Maj. L.N. Coulson of 4 Cdo.; Maurice Chauver of 10 Inter-Allied Cdo.; Chris Barbarski of the Polish Institute; and Len Whitaker, who has done much research in this field.

## Regimentals

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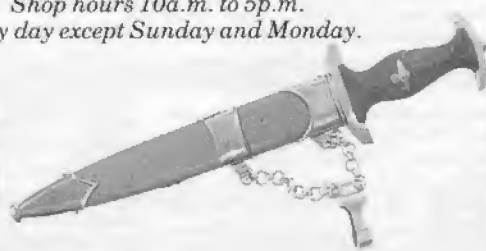
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# LETTERS

## 'King George's Indians' and James Wolfe

The two illustrations by Gerry Embleton in the former article (*'MI'* No. 9, pp. 39 & 41) are now part of the collection of Environment Canada, Parks, and were purchased from the artist in 1986. The Butler's Ranger originally had a green waistcoat and red turnbacks, but this was changed by the artist to conform to documentation in the Haldiman Papers, which indicate white waistcoats and turnbacks. The exact appearance of the cap remains problematical; but they were known to go into battle with scarves around their heads. Hats were apparently worn, as 30 dozen were requested for the corps in September 1779. The photo in the article was taken by Claude Lefebvre, photographer at Environment Canada, Parks.

With regard to the fine article on James Wolfe: the battle of Culloden was fought on 16 April (Old Style) 1746, not in 1745. The plate showing the uniform of Barrell's 4th Foot gives silver lace but shows a small gilded gorget. Were not gorgets somewhat bigger in the mid-18th century, and of the regimental button metal before 1796? Mind you, variety was possible: at the battle of Montmorency during the siege of Quebec Capt. Ochserlong of the 2nd Bn., 60th Foot had a gold-laced hat instead of the regimental silver lace<sup>(1)</sup>. A French account of 17 July 1759 confirms the appearance, and plain red coat, depicted in the Quebec plate by Bryan Fosten. The plain red uniform may have been popular with British officers as far back of Marlborough's time. On 23 October 1711 he ordered the officers of Foot of his army to 'be all Cloath'd in Redd Plain and uniforme ....'<sup>(2)</sup>

Finally, your readers may be interested in Joseph Highmore's portrait of Wolfe in the uniform of the 20th Foot, in which he served 1748-58. He is shown with scarlet coat, collar and cuff flap; yellow lapels; silver lace and buttons, and crimson sash.

In closing, every wish for the continued success of your really excellent magazine.

René Chartrand  
National Historic Parks  
& Sites Directorate,  
Ottawa, Ontario

<sup>(1)</sup>*Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec* ... J. Johnson, QM Sgt., 58th Foot; Public Archives of Canada, MG18, N18, box 3.

<sup>(2)</sup>British Library, Add. MS29, 477, courtesy Dr. John Houlding.

James Wolfe in the uniform of Sackville's Regiment, the 20th Foot; oil by Joseph Highmore (Public Archives of Canada, C3916)

Sketch of sniper's smock — see letter from Stuart Reid. Of DPM material, it is longer than the para-smock which it generally resembles; differences are the side-mounted skirt pockets; fly with press-stud fastening, covering



front zip; and rubber pads incorporated in the lining of shoulders, upper arms, and under-arms of elbows and forearms. The sling hooks attached to the rear of each upper arm.

## Uniform bibliography

When I began work on an index to *Tradition* I knew little about the literature of military uniforms. A reference to the *Index to British Military Costume Prints* in Philip Haythornthwaite's article in *'MI'* No. 6 offered me my first source for the identification of insufficiently labelled plates appearing in *Tradition*; and Andrew Mackay's letter in *'MI'* No. 8 opened many more avenues.

Has any work been done toward a bibliography devoted solely to military uniforms that would include information found in these previously cited works, and/or

bring those works up to date? I would like to know of any such work ... and to offer my services to anyone interested in taking on such a project.

Many thanks for providing a forum for an inquiry such as this.  
Allan D. Satin  
3401 Brookline Ave., Apt. 4  
Cincinnati, OH 45220, USA

## Foreign Service helmet flashes

Mr. R.S. Kidd of 23 Westfield Way, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW wishes to hear from Mr. David N. Adamson, of Amersham, whose letter on the KRRC helmet flash was published in *'MI'* No. 9.

## Sniper's smock

As a former Army sniper (Royal Regiment of Fusiliers) I found Brien Hobb's 'Royal Marine Commandos in the Field 1980-83' (*'MI'* No. 9) particularly interesting. The sniper's version of the smock which he mentions was, as I recall, slightly longer than the standard version, though not as long as the CW parka. The sling hooks, flat steel about an inch broad on the rear of each upper arm, were a damned nuisance, and usually removed, since they tended to snag on just about anything, usually at awkward moments. Latterly I wore, depending upon prevailing conditions, various combinations of standard DPM smock, an improved commercial version of the Arctic windproof parka (in the same 'Ventile' material as the old '43 pattern windproofs) and some horrid-looking home-made camouflage stuff. I never came across special sniper's trousers; instead, heavy duty foam rubber knee pads were issued along with the sniper smock, for sewing on to ordinary combat trousers. The pads were slightly less than a foot square, and covered with DPM material. They altered the appearance of the trousers quite distinctively; and this may account for rumours of a special sniper pattern?

Stuart Reid  
North Shields  
Northumberland

## Oxford University OTC museum

Oxford University Officers Training Corps, a TA officers training establishment based on Oxford, Oxford Polytechnic, Reading and Shrivenham, and which can trace its origins back to 1642 and the Royalist cause, has opened a Corps museum. Currently there are two tunics from the heyday of the Victorian Rifle Volunteer era; a 1950s BD-clad figure with full '37 pattern webbing; a proposed 1960s figure in green combat kit with '58 pattern webbing, and a WRAC figure in 1950s BD and skirt. There is a good selection of silver, mostly from the 1850s; and some interesting prints and photos, include one of Gp. Capt. Leonard Cheshire VC as a pre-war officer cadet.

For any Corps or Regimental museum, tracing examples of uniforms, kit, badges and pictures is difficult. Since *'MI'* reaches readers who are attuned to this type of research, the OUOTC would be most interested to hear from anybody who knows of sensibly-priced items relevant to our museum. There may indeed be readers who served in the OUOTC and still have items or photographs which would make excellent additions to the museum, which would be happy to save them from sale at a militaria fair or mould in an attic.  
William Fowler  
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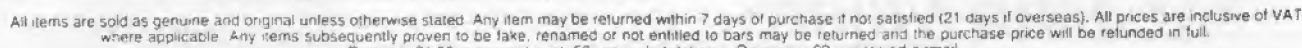
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# Sir John Moore

PHILIP J. HAYTHORNTHWAITE  
Paintings by RICHARD HOOK

*'We buried him darkly at  
dead of night,  
The sods with our bayonets  
turning ...'*

The lines of Charles Wolfe's poem describe the climax of a military career at once successful but unfulfilled, with the death in battle of the commander of the British Army in the Iberian Peninsula: Sir John Moore.

John Moore was born on 30 November 1761, the son of a Glasgow medical practitioner. Destined for a military career from an early age, and throughout his life devoted to his profession, John Moore was commissioned as ensign in the 51st Regiment of Foot at the age of 15. (He had previously been offered an Austrian commission by Emperor Joseph II due to family friendships with the Duke of Hamilton: the Moores moved in higher circles than might have been expected of a Scottish doctor!). After his apprenticeship, Moore transferred in January 1778 to the 82nd Foot or 'Hamilton Regiment' (a Lowland corps named after its colonel, the Duke), as captain-lieutenant (i.e. commander of the lieutenant-colonel's company).

Moore's baptism of fire occurred during the American War of Independence when resisting an American landing near Halifax, Nova Scotia, in July 1779. The 82nd was an untried regiment and, heavily outnumbered, mostly broke and fled; only Moore's section of 20 men stood firm, encouraged by his calling 'Will the Hamilton men leave me?' — early evidence of the personality which was to win widespread respect and affection. As ever, Moore was

candid about the experience: '... at the first fire they gave us, which was within thirty yards, I was a good deal startled, or, in other words, *devilishly frightened*, but I think this went gradually off afterwards<sup>(1)</sup>.

After the American War Moore made steady if unspectacular progress in the army. Elected MP for Peebles, Lanark, Linlithgow and Selkirk (in the Hamilton interest), he served briefly in the 60th Foot; and in 1790 purchased the lieutenant-colonelcy of his old regiment, the 51st, in succession to 'stark staring mad' John Jaques. Not surprisingly, he found there to be 'no System in the Regt. I am endeavouring to introduce one. I train the recruits to it first, before I attempt the old men of the Regt. By the time they are perfect, the Serjeants will be

au fait of it ...<sup>(2)</sup>. This early insistence on training (by implication, to a system of his own devising) adumbrated his later work.

Moore led his regiment in action in Corsica in 1794, most notably in the storm of the 'Convention' redoubt at San Fiorenzo, in which Moore was embroiled in furious hand-to-hand combat. In his first action in Nova Scotia the young Moore had had the American commander in the sights of his fusil, but had declined to fire; now he had no such qualms, recalling how he was attacked by a French grenadier in a white uniform (thus probably a regular of the ex-Royal army), and how he thrust clean through the man's body.

The operations in Corsica were of minor significance, but helped found Moore's reputation; though Capt. Horatio Nelson, present with the naval force, wondered if Moore's influence on the commander, Stuart, was the reason for the army's over-caution — throughout his career, Moore had both devoted friends and vehement critics. Injury at Corsica began his reputation for

ill-luck, as he frequently suffered wounds or sickness. But if Corsica enhanced Moore's military reputation, its politics almost caused his ruin. Moore's Whig politics always hindered his career, and here culminated in a blazing row with Sir Gilbert Elliot, the island's viceroy, who had tried to blacken Moore's name. With his Scottish temper roused Moore raged at Elliot, and was duly sent home in disgrace.

His next appointment was as brigadier-general in the West Indies, where he almost succumbed to the 'black vomit'. Surviving the West Indian fevers he was promoted to major-general in 1798, and served in Holland in 1799, being shot through the head at Egmont-op-Zee — an injury which miraculously left no lasting damage. In 1800 he returned to the Mediterranean and fought with distinction at Alexandria, his unlucky reputation striking again when he was shot through the thigh.

## THE SHORNCLIFFE LEGEND

Recovered from his latest wound, Moore was appointed to command Shorncliffe Camp, where preparations were being made to resist the anticipated invasion. He was appointed a Knight of the Order of the Bath, an honour which brought with it the title 'Sir', which Moore disliked ('I am your General. I am *General* Moore<sup>(3)</sup>). It was at Shorncliffe that Moore's lasting reputation was established, as a trainer of men and the 'originator' of the light infantry tactics which had been greatly neglected since the American War, but which were now required urgently to combat the French *tirailleurs*.

Moore's training at Shorncliffe was not simply to develop light infantry manoeuvres, but to encourage



Sir John Moore in the plain (unlaced) coat of lieutenant-general, as worn at Corunna. (Engraving by C. Turner after Sir Thomas Lawrence).





An unusual equestrian portrait of Moore in dress uniform, c.1808. (Contemporary engraving)

self-reliance and independence among the ordinary soldiers — anathema to a higher command rooted firmly in the automaton-drill of the 18th century. Aided by the enthusiastic young officers whom he gathered around him, Moore's innovations ultimately produced the Light Division of Peninsular War fame, arguably the most superior military force of the age; yet it is easy to over-estimate Moore's contribution. Without doubt his rôle was of vital significance — more important in the context of the development of the British Army than all his campaign service — but it was as a developer and influencer, rather than an innovator, that Moore excelled. He had begun this work in Ireland in 1798-99, and now distilled his previous instructions into the ideal of light infantry tactics — based on the book published in 1798 by the Austrian Col. Francis de Rottenburg, commander of the 5/60th, who had served under Moore in Ireland. But even if Moore were not the innovator sometimes claimed, his reputation as a developer of the light infantry system merits no less.

## THE CORUNNA CAMPAIGN

Promoted to lieutenant-general in 1805, in 1808 he was moved from the Mediterranean to Portugal, and succeeded to command of the British army in the

Peninsula following the recall of Burrard and Wellesley after the Convention of Cintra. Late in the year he decided to march into Spain to co-operate with the Spanish forces opposing Napoleon's invasion. Initially not realising the unreliability of his allies ('the imbecility of the Spanish Government exceeds belief'<sup>(6)</sup>), he found himself cut off from Portugal, and was compelled to retreat to Corunna. Executed in the depth of winter, the retreat has passed into legend as an ordeal second only to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow; yet miraculously, the starved and ragged British army was able to face about at Corunna and defeat Marshal Soult, thus ensuring their safe evacuation. Despite his critics, Moore's retreat was conducted with skill and was as successful as circumstances could allow; only the decision to trust his allies raises a question on Moore's ability at the highest level of command.

At Corunna on 16 January 1809 Moore, as usual, made no attempt to remove himself from danger; as he had written during the American War, 'it is very hard that a man who always exposed himself whenever there was the least danger, should die in his bed. To be killed is certainly in some degree more honourable, and certainly much more pleasing to a soldier'<sup>(5)</sup>. To a man of the 42nd who had lost his leg to a cannon ball Moore said kindly, 'My good fellow,

don't make such a noise; we must bear these things better'<sup>(6)</sup>.

Shortly afterwards a roundshot hit Moore in the left shoulder, almost severing the arm and smashing his ribs. Carried to the rear, Moore sent away his surgeons to attend to those not beyond help; and when an officer tried to remove his sword, the hilt of which had entered the wound, he said, 'I had rather it should go out of the field with me'. Carried to a room in Corunna, Moore continued to ask about the course of the battle: 'It is a great satisfaction to know that we have beat the French. I hope my country will do me justice'. His last words were to Capt. James Stanhope, brother of the beautiful Lady Hester with whom the bachelor Moore's name had been linked: 'Remember me to your sister ...'

Moore was buried in his cloak on the ramparts of Corunna, lowered into a simple grave by sashes; it was left to Soult to order guns to be fired over the grave in tribute to a gallant adversary. His political opponents made to lessen his reputation; but his fame is assured, if not just as an inspirational leader and trainer and not inconsiderable general, then by Wolfe's verses:

*'Slowly and sadly we laid him down,  
From the field of his fame fresh  
and gory;  
We carved not a line and we  
raised not a stone —  
But we left him alone with his  
glory'.*

MI

## Footnotes

- (1) Letter to his father, January 1780; see Oman p.49.
- (2) Quoted in Oman, p.74.
- (3) See Parkinson, p.130.
- (4) Moore to J.H. Frere, British Envoy Extraordinary to the Spanish government, 19 Nov. 1808; see Parkinson p.187.
- (5) Letter to his father, May 1781; see Oman, p.51.
- (6) Napier, Sir William, *Life & Opinions of General Sir Charles Napier* (London 1857), I pp.94-5.
- (7) *Passages in the Early Military Life of Sir George T. Napier written by himself* (London 1884), pp.47-48.

## Richard Hook's reconstructions on our back cover (top):

As lieutenant-colonel of the 51st, Moore wears the infantry uniform of the early 1790s, with the standing collar worn by most regiments but not officially regulated until 1796. The 51st was a 'laced' regiment, in that its officers' coats were normally ornamented with loops of metallic lace, instead of having less expensive coats with embroidered loops (which might also be worn by 'laced' regiments for undress and on service). Some officers at this time abandoned hair-powder and queues when serving in hot climates, but Moore is shown wearing both: probably he did not abandon these until the Egyptian campaign, when he was painted wearing short hair. He carries a straight-bladed 'spadroon', which he preferred to a sabre, telling the young George Napier that a straight blade had saved his life in Corsica. Without it 'he would not have been able to run the grenadier through the body, and would have been killed himself ... he told me he never should forget the horrid sensation it gave him drawing the sword out of the man's body, and that it was always a painful recollection to him ...'<sup>(7)</sup>. The regimental distinctions of the 51st were deep green facings and gold lace; Moore wears two epaulettes of field rank as ordered in 1791, though at this date no badges were borne upon the straps to differentiate between grades.

As lieutenant-general at Corunna (bottom), Moore wears the 'unlaced' staff uniform worn on active service, with blue facings and gilt buttons in threes (the distinction of lieutenant-general), scarlet collar with blue patch, and epaulettes of gold embroidery upon a cloth ground. His hat has an oilskin cover (commonly worn in the field). Despite his preference for straight swords it is known that he carried a sabre at Corunna. The officers of the 52nd Light Infantry had subscribed £500 or £600 to buy him a diamond star of his Order of the Bath, but on service he would have worn an embroidered or tinselled version.

## Sources

There have been a number of Moore biographies, of which Sir John Moore (Carola Oman, London 1953) remains the standard; Moore of Corunna (R. Parkinson, London 1976) is the most modern. Also of interest are *Life and Letters of Sir John Moore* (B. Brownrigg, London 1921) and *The Diary of Sir John Moore* (Sir J.F. Maurice, London 1904). For Moore's light infantry training, see *Sir John Moore's System of Training* (J.F.C. Fuller, London 1925); especially revealing is *Sir John Moore's Light Infantry Instructions of 1798-99* (J.F.C. Fuller, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. XXX, London 1952, pp.68-75).

## Sir John Moore



Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Corsica, 1794



Lieutenant-General, Spain, 1809